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AT GOLF CLUBS IN THE NORTH EAST AND YORKSHIRE - ISSUE

11

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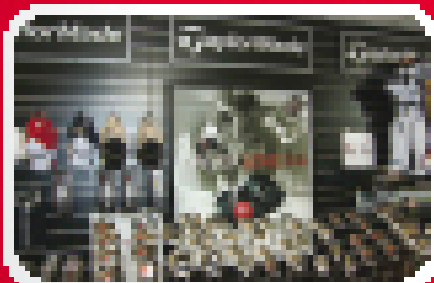
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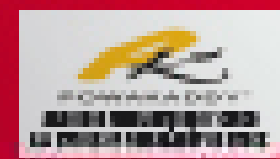
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It is hard to believe that this edition of the magazine marks our first anniversary.

And in the spirit of birthday celebrations we have a couple of presents for you in the form of added content from further afield.

By popular demand, we have expanded our magazine into parts of Yorkshire.

We intend to cover the county by reviewing a course every month and including news, pictures and views from White Rose clubs in addition to, but not at the expense of, North East items.

So it is a warm welcome to our Yorkshire readers and advertisers - we hope you enjoy your free magazine as much as those who have been with us and supported us from day one.

Having recently introduced the popular From the Bunker column, we have also now signed up European Tour professional Graeme Storm. The Rockliffe pro will be telling us about his life on the tour in his column every month with the first instalment on Page 23.

We have other new content plans which will be unveiled over the coming months alongside the news, interviews and competitions which have become regular features of North East - or should I say - Northern Golfer.

Despite the appalling weather, there has been plenty going on, including a win in the sun for a Teesside pair and golf in the snow thanks to one enterprising North East club.

Yorkshire golfer John Parry tells us his hopes for the coming year having won back his card, while courses throughout the region are preparing for the season, with many being chosen to host prestigious tournaments.

You can read all about them and much more in this 64-page issue.

For now, we wish you all a fantastic and hopefully mostly dry season ahead. See you next month.



04 to 19 TEEING OFF

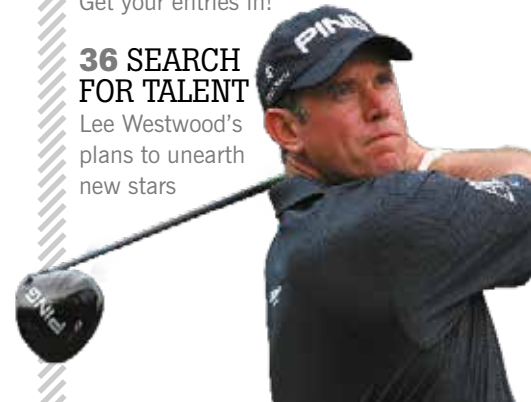
Reports from around the region including a win in Dubai, golf in the snow, celebration dinner and Graeme Storm on tour.

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Lee Westwood's plans to unearth new stars



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FRONT COVER

John Parry tells us how a year away from the tour has made him hungry for more now he's back on track Page 32.



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Boro duo fly high in Dubai

North East team wins Pairs Championship as others from the region perform well but miss out on success

Teeside duo Chris Wall and Mark Green are celebrating winning the League to Dubai Pairs Championship. Chris (*above left*), from Middlesbrough, and Mark (*above right*), from Stockton-on-Tees, who both play at Middlesbrough golf club, fought off four other pairs from the UK on three of Dubai's top courses - the Emirates Wadi lay-out, designed by Nick Faldo, Dubai Creek and the Earth course at Jumeirah Golf Estates.

Competitors enjoyed an all-expenses-paid trip to the Emirate after battling their way through a local league and then a regional final.

Chris, an eight handicapper, and Mark, who plays off 11, scored 425 points to finish 20 clear. Chris said: "We took the lead on day one at the Faldo and just hoped to hang on until the end."

"To get a chance to play these courses is a prize in itself so anything else we achieved was a bonus. We were trying our best and it has been a tournament played in great spirit with some good golf thrown in."

And Mark added: "We have played the best three courses we will ever play back-to-back... a very special experience."

"Dubai Creek was very special, but we also

got to have a social night of golf at the Meydan course, which was the first time we have ever played floodlit golf. The organisation of the event has been great and extremely friendly, as the guys who run it have been a key part. We have also met so many new friends and now have invites to play all over the UK."

Inspired by the European Tour's Race to Dubai, the League to Dubai - which is sanctioned by the R and A - pits amateur golfers against each other initially in a local league format playing two home matches and two away.

The league winners head to one of three regional finals from where the top three in the singles and top two in the pairs' competition qualify for the grand final in Dubai.

While the Middlesbrough pair triumphed Malcolm Crowson, from Leeds, and Colin Peace, from Wakefield, had to settle for fifth place.

Malcolm, a 14-handicapper from Wychwood Park and Colin Peace, who plays off 22 at Willow Valley, scored 355 points. The region was denied the double when Cottesmore's Andy Clement won the individual title with Malcolm Gregg (Hallamshire) fourth, Matt Hazell (Malton and Norton) seventh and Lee Myers (Tynemouth) eighth all missing out on the big prize.

Parklands taste test

Parklands Golf Club in Newcastle is offering free golf coaching taster sessions for ladies during February and March to help them to GET INTO GOLF.

They are open to beginners/non members and provide an ideal opportunity for adults to experience the game of golf. The activities are offered as part of England Golf's Club Coaching Grant scheme, which provides GolfMark (incorporating Clubmark) facilities with funding to support recruitment and retention activities for adults, young people and families. GolfMark is England Golf's national scheme that identifies and recognises junior and beginner friendly golf facilities.

Details of all venues offering coaching activities as part of the Club Coaching Grant scheme will be promoted on the Get into Golf website at www.getintogolf.org

The Northumberland County Golf Partnership is also helping to develop golf within the county by offering sessions to increase participation and providing support to golf clubs, players, coaches and volunteers. See www.northumberlandcgp.co.uk for more information.

Many golf clubs have been able to offer golf taster sessions and activities for a number of years through the support of England Golf and have introduced thousands of beginners to golf and golf clubs. In the 2011/2012 scheme, over 22,000 participants (69% adults and 31% juniors) attended one of the golf clubs offering activities as part of this scheme. 49% of the adults and 61% of the juniors went on to take further coaching.

To find out further information and to book a lesson with a qualified PGA Coach call Parklands Golf Club on 0191 2364480.

For further information please contact the Golf Development Team at development@englandgolf.org



➤ Main image: Chris Wall (left) and Mark Green. (above) Matt Hazell, Malcolm Gregg, Lee Myers



Gary Stoker won cash for CHUF

Chipping for CHUF

Thousands raised for Freeman Hospital heart charity thanks to the Close House challenge

Close House, Northumberland, where Lee Westwood is the official Attached Tour Professional, once again helped the Children's Heart Unit Fund (CHUF) at the Freeman Hospital when Gary Stoker chipped the golf ball across the lake outside the No.19 clubhouse straight into the hole to win £1,837.

Russell Smith, golf director, said: "CHUF is a charity we hold very dear to our hearts here at Close House. We have raised a lot of money for CHUF over the last 18 months through our marquee and golfing events but we wanted to do something a little different that would involve everyone. The CHUF Chipping competition was the solution.

"Anyone can buy three balls from the golf shop for only £1: 50p goes into the pot and 50p goes to CHUF. If they ace the hole, they win the pot and CHUF receive a fantastic donation to allow them to continue their fantastic work.

"The competition started in July

last year with £1000 and the prize pot has quickly increased to £1837 with the support of members and guests. It looks really easy but has proven to be challenge with over 3000 balls hit into the lake. Gary produced a great chip and we're delighted it has been won."

Gary, an ex-firefighter from Newcastle is a keen golfer, playing off six. He said: "I joined Close House as a Founder Member when the Championship Colt course opened in April 2011. I have played in a lot of the competitions and regularly with my friends.

"Each time I played I tried the CHUF Chip without success. I couldn't believe it when the ball finally dropped in the hole. All those hours at the Close House Academy and on the course have finally paid off."

The CHUF Chipping competition has been reset and currently stands at £125. If you want to have a try, call into Close House Golf Shop and buy your three balls for £1 to have a go. It is for a great cause and you can win a few pounds, too.

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Wynyard scores a hat-trick of tournaments

Wynyard's top-class Wellington Course will stage three of the Teesside Union's major tournaments this year.

The new Rockcliffe course at Hurworth, near Darlington, and Seaton Carew's championship links are also included in a packed fixture list which kicks off in April.

Rockcliffe will host the Teesside Alliance v Teesside Union scratch team match on April 7 while Seaton Carew stage the union's Club Team Championship on June 2.

The North Yorkshire and South Durham Championship will be at Wynyard on June 30 followed by the union's Junior Captains Patrons Day on July 15 and then the Union Team Championship on September 7-8.

Hosting the three events is a boost for Wynyard, which scooped the Clark Cup – Durham County's team knock-out trophy – for the second year running last year and both club and course has simply blossomed since it staged the Seve

Trophy in 2005. As well as the doing the Clark Cup double, Wynyard's Teesside Union League performance has also been outstanding.

Three years ago they were in the third division and won it. Then in 2011 they won the second division title and last year they finished runners-up in division one.

Other union dates include the Abraham Salver at Cleveland on August 11 and the Charles Amer Salver at Teesside on September 2. The union's scratch squad have a busy programme following that Rockcliffe date with a match against Durham County at Hartlepool on April 21 as warm up to their Yorkshire Inter-District League matches which are:

May 19 v Harrogate (Thirsk and Northallerton), June 9 v Halifax and Huddersfield (Catterick), June 23 v Bradford (Keighley), July 14 v East Riding (Billingham), August 4 v Leeds (Cookridge Hall), August 18 v York (Pike Hills), Sept 1 v Sheffield (Wilton).



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PGA Europro Tour returns 12th August



Race is on for talented juniors

Two players from the Mizuno Race 2 Rockliffe – Durham's exciting initiative for juniors – have turned their attentions to supporting the development and organisation of the event for 2013.

Carl Morfoot and Simon Jones have both been recruited as volunteer R2R co-ordinators to help review, plan and run the summer-long order of merit under the wing of the Durham County Golf Partnership.

Both have featured in a grand final, held at Rockliffe Hall GC, since the R2R was launched in 2011.

They are already experienced golfers – Carl, 19, a golf studies student at Gateshead College is a member at Woodham GC off two handicap while Teesside University student Simon, 22, is a member of Billingham GC and plays off five.

The introduction of volunteers like these will help the Durham CGP continue to support its junior initiatives in the county while also focussing on attracting more adults into the sport.

Says county development officer Jonathan Ward: "I am delighted to have Carl and Simon on board and their support will allow me to continue to work on the other projects that have had such a positive impact on growing the game in Durham.

"I have known both Carl and Simon for a couple of years and feel they are both in an ideal position to give me important feedback from a player's perspective, having both played in one of the two grand finals held since the R2R was launched in 2011.



Carl Morfoot, Jonathan Ward and Simon Jones with the Race2Rockliffe Trophy

"Thanks to support from sponsors, volunteers, players and parents, the Mizuno Race 2 Rockliffe continues to go from strength to strength and is fast becoming one of the best junior order of merit competitions in the country.

"The Durham CGP is delighted to be able to give two young people an opportunity to add valuable experience to their CVs, while their support will free up time for me to play an increasing role in the many other adult participation projects going on across the county."

Full details of the qualifying events and the registration details for the 2013 Mizuno Race 2 Rockliffe will be available in February on the Durham CGP website – which can be found at www.durhamgolfpartnership.com. Any other young people interested in volunteering opportunities with the Durham CGP should contact Jonathan Ward on 077758 48602 or by emailing durhamcdo@hotmail.com

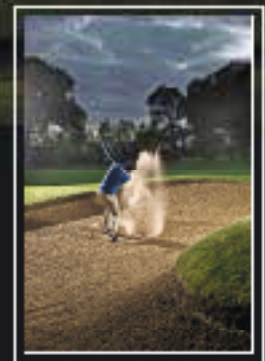
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Bedale becomes a flexible friend

Scheme to encourage more members

Bedale is the latest club offering a flexible membership to golfers who would like to join a club but cannot find the time to play regularly.

Based on a points system and costing just £200, it provides many of the benefits of full membership such as discount at the bar, a handicap, being able to join sections such as the rabbits, seniors and ladies and play in their competitions as well as being eligible to represent Bedale in friendly matches against other clubs and also be able to play in the majority of club competitions.

Bedale Flexible Members can also choose when they wish to start their membership as the scheme works

on a rolling 12-month basis. The subscription is converted into points and funds between 10 and 20 rounds at a cost guaranteed to be below the daily green fee.

Once the initial £200 has been spent, extra points can be purchased as required and, if a member of the scheme decides they want to join as full members, any unspent points can be set against the subscription.

In tandem with the launch of flexible membership, Bedale is replacing its country member category with a new and more straightforward Second Membership scheme. This will allow existing members of clubs geographically close to Bedale to join at a discount.



Bedale golf course

"Golf clubs cannot stand still in the current economic climate," said Bedale chairman Jim Shaw. "Around here, the days of waiting lists and joining fees are long gone and we need innovative ideas to welcome new members."

"Our flexible membership scheme should appeal to golfers who have the passion but currently not the time to justify full membership, and also to those who presently pay and play but

would fancy sampling the undoubted benefits of a members club.

"Likewise, our new second membership category should attract golfers who may be considering a change of club and would welcome the chance to play Bedale more regularly."

Also new at Bedale this year is an online tee-booking system and a refreshed schedule for the club's open competitions.

Full details of all categories of membership and entry forms for Bedale's Opens are available online at www.bedalegolfclub.com or from the secretary Mike Mayman on 01677 422451.



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Weather is **sNOw** problem for Thirsk!

Not everyone let the big freeze beat them

Thirsk and Northallerton turned the bad weather to their advantage and opened a purpose-built nine-hole course.

Head greenkeeper Roger Mackerell and his team worked tirelessly to remove snow and set up the course following a conversation with professional Rob Garner.

Roger said: "Rob suggested that if we could cut through the snow on the fairways of the front nine holes we could probably have a round of golf. I laughed at first but after we moved the snow on the first hole I suddenly realised that we might be on to something."

The green staff then worked

hard and nine holes were cut out and made available to play. All the holes were 150 yard Par 3s with winter tees and greens cut out on each fairway.

Club pro Rob said: "This has to be a first for this area, considering we had seven to 10 inches of snow and most golf clubs were closed. It meant golfers from the area could still get their clubs out and come along for a knock, despite the weather conditions."

Trevor Bennett, the Thirsk secretary, said: "We are now officially open for both members and guests which in the snow I didn't think was possible. I want to thank Roger and

Thirsk and Northallerton members trying out their nine hole snow course



his team for all of their hard work in making this happen." Just a few minutes from the A19, Thirsk and Northallerton is easily accessible and nestles in the beautiful countryside of North Yorkshire, enjoying a splendid backdrop of

rolling hills – even when they're covered with snow. The club has a very active membership with full fixture schedules aimed at players of all standards and currently has full, country and junior memberships available.

For further information contact the club secretary on 01845 525115 or email secretary@tngc.co.uk or visit our website at www.tngc.co.uk to download a membership application form.

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**Ferrie tees up
Whickham's
youngsters**



☞ Durham County President Clyde Camp with his guests, including England President Paul Baxter and R and A captain Pierre Bechmann at Durham County's dinner in Durham Castle



☞ Ken Ferrie presents Ron Snell

Whickham Golf Club recently held an event to introduce the club's new Junior Liaison Officer to junior members and their parents.

Michael Farrey has been appointed to develop the present group and encourage more youngsters to come along. He has already embarked on an ambitious programme to open coaching opportunities for all levels and ages.

The "Tee Up" idea was conceived and prepared by Michael and was voted a huge success by the parents and members who came along.

The 'evening was supported by European Tour professional Ken Ferrie who was there to inspire and encourage the juniors at the club.

Ken described at some length his journey from a local player at Bedlington to British Boys champion, his experiences in America, both golf and educationally, and his successful life on tour as a professional player.

He told them they too could develop from local junior players into the professional ranks if they had the desire, commitment and talent.

The night was rounded off with a few drinks and the informal talk-in continued on all aspects of golf with Ken and Whickham's members.

Ken was a huge hit and he also took time to present Ronnie Snell with a token gift, marking the juniors' appreciation for his outstanding work raising money for their section.

*Gala dinner
marks region's
centurions*

Celebrating on a great night in Durham

Five clubs which achieved their centenary in the last two years were recognised at Durham county's annual dinner.

More than 160 attended the event at Durham Castle with the main speakers being England President Paul Baxter and Pierre Bechmann, captain of the R and A.

County President Clyde Camp presented the 2011 and 2012 Order of Merit to Seaham's David Patterson - who was unable to attend due to work commitments and county captain Bryan Ross received the memento on his behalf - while 2012 winner Gavin Nesbit (Baldon) was there to receive his memento.

England President Paul Baxter presented centenary plates to Consett, Seaham and Whickham, which celebrated their centenaries in 2011, and Baldon and Heworth, which reached that milestone last year.

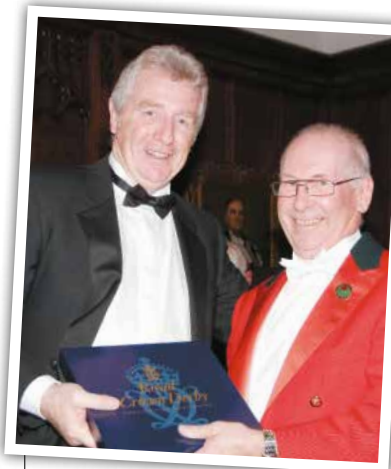
While all five clubs can look back on successful centenary years, Heworth and Baldon probably had more than most to celebrate.

Heworth for its excellent hosting of the England Seniors Championship Finals and the opening of its centenary bridges as well as Martin McCririck winning the Durham County Championship just ahead of their centenary year.

Baldon managed to get it bang on with Gavin Nesbit capturing their first county title for more than half a century and its men's, ladies and junior teams all carried off their respective league titles.

Nesbit started 2012 with a bang for Baldon winning the Durham County Matchplay Championship on his home track. He also played for the Durham County side and won the county order of merit.

Baldon also won the North Durham League division three title



☞ England president Paul Baxter (right) presents an England centenary plate to 2012 Baldon captain Fred Palmer at Durham County's dinner at Durham Castle

and promotion, the ladies won the Anderson League and the juniors retained the North East Durham County League One title and the Durham County Overall Champion of Champions.

Not a bad year!

It was just about Clyde Camp's last official duty as county president as he ended his two-year stint in office shortly afterwards handing over to Allan Roberts, a former Ravensworth club and county captain, at the county's annual meeting at Ramside Hall.

Beamish's John Bosanko, Bishop Auckland's Gerry Johnson and Billingham's Des Good were all elected to the county executive.



▀ Martyn Stubbings

Stubbings up for challenge

New coach joins the team at Rockliffe ahead of a busy year of tournaments

Rockliffe Hall has strengthened its team ahead of a busy year of high profile tournaments with the appointment of Martyn Stubbings.

Martyn, who was the UK's youngest PGA head golf professional when at Dinsdale Spa – he was just 21 - has taken on the role of assistant head golf professional at the Rockliffe club and academy.

Well known for his coaching expertise which has seen him work with junior, county players and right up to international level, Martyn, now 30, was at Dinsdale for almost a decade and also ran his own pro shop.

He's no slouch as a player either, winning a series of pro-am tournaments including the Cleveland/Srixon Invitational at Turnberry last year.

Hailing from Eaglescliffe, in Stockton-on-Tees, Martyn will be responsible for coaching and

development within Rockliffe Hall's golf club as well as managing a variety of events and competitions.

He said: "Joining Rockliffe Hall's prestigious golf club is a great career move as it is very well known and respected. I'm really looking forward to the tournaments we have in the pipeline and working with a passionate team, club members and a range of players of all ages and abilities."

Rockliffe will be hosting a number of high profile tournaments such as the Trilby Tour and the Northern Golf Masters and many corporate and charity events this year and head pro Jon Stacey said: "Martyn brings with him a wealth of experience and is a well-known face amongst golfers.

"He has some very impressive achievements and also some great ideas to take our golf club forward as we move into a busy period with some really interesting plans."



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TEEING OFF



Paul Eales (right) receives his award from John Heggarty

Paul honoured for a lifetime of service

Northern light Paul Eales has received a PGA Recognition Award for his outstanding contribution to golf.

Eales, who has strong links with Durham and the North East, was honoured alongside Ashington-born England football legend Sir Bobby Charlton, who received an award for his services to football and sport.

The PGA fundraising lunch at Manchester's Hilton Hotel will go towards supporting the PGA Benevolent Fund which is a charity set up to help PGA members in times of hardship.

Eales, 49, is a stalwart of the PGA North Region having enjoyed a wide-ranging career, excelling as a player, coach and also as a respected golf pundit with the BBC on both TV and radio.

His playing and coaching career has made him a frequent visitor to the North East and his father Walter Eales was a Durham City man.

His grandfather Tom Shingler came from Ashington, Northumberland, and Eales himself lived in the village of Cleadon, Tyne and Wear, for two years as a toddler. He began his career as an assistant at Royal Lytham and St Annes under Eddie Birchenough and graduated through the Challenge Tour

to the European Tour and won the 1994 Extremadura Open in Spain.

Eales played in seven Open Championships and one US Open and it was after missing the cut at the 1996 championship at Royal Lytham that he was asked to be a summariser for the BBC. This led to a successful career behind the microphone, where he remains a popular and familiar figure in the media world.

A member of the European Tour board of directors, he is support coach to the England Golf Under 18 boys' squad and lead coach for the England Golf North West squads for boys and girls aged 16-18.

"The award came out of the blue," said Eales, who was presented with his accolade by PGA vice chairman John Heggarty.

"I had been asked to do a Q and A but once I saw the award I was blown away. I have been very fortunate in that opportunities have come my way and as one door has shut another has opened and I've recently experienced that with the academic side of things at the University of Birmingham which has given me a greater insight into coaching."

Eales is midway through a Post Graduate Diploma in sport pedagogy and as he nears 50 is looking at playing again on the European Seniors Tour.



Chairman Bill Adamson, captain Colin Loader, secretary Gordon Peters and president Eddie Pollock, right, and at the opening of Heworth's Centenary bridges, above

Heworth's 100 reasons to celebrate new bridges



There were celebrations when Heworth rounded off its centenary year with the opening of two new bridges at the Gateshead course. Four years ago, Heworth hosted the Durham v Yorkshire Northern Counties League match, two years ago it was the Durham County Championship and last year – its centenary year - it hosted the English Seniors County Championship Finals.

Had Durham or Northumberland qualified and been involved in the finals it would have been the icing on the cake, but neither was successful in the Northern qualifier where Lancashire triumphed.

However, Heworth did the North

proud by hosting the tournament and drew praise from all those who played and, given the appalling weather over the last year, the course was in great shape and the event was another highlight of Heworth's centenary year as Hertfordshire secured the title for the first time.

Heworth secretary Gordon Peters received letters from John Williams, chairman of the England Golf Championships Committee, Gaius Potton, captain of Hertfordshire and England Golf President Paul Baxter all congratulating the club on their efforts in making sure the tournament went ahead and making everyone welcome as Heworth always do.

The weather did delay the opening of the two new bridges at the club's 17th hole until last month, but they are a permanent reminder of the centenary year as is the club's centenary book which has just been published.

The bridges opening was combined with the driving in of new captains Lynn Errington and Colin Loader, who cut the tape to officially open the bridges and in doing so marked the end of a tremendous period of fund-raising by the whole club, although special mention must be made of the veterans' section, who raised around £8,000.

If anything, it served once again to demonstrate what Heworth does well - and that's doing it themselves,

as club chairman Bill Adamson designed the bridges – which are reminiscent of the Swilcan Bridge at St Andrews – and many others helped with the project.

Club secretary Gordon Peters summed it up when he said: "The opening of the two magnificent stone bridges is a fitting end to an incredible centenary year for Heworth.

"Thanks must go to all involved, from the youngest junior member to oldest social member, who have contributed financially to the success of our centenary experience.

"I only hope the members of the next 100 years gain as much reward from their efforts as those of the last 100 years."



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Get into Golf fans Doreen Bryce (left) and Angela Page at South Moor Golf Club.

Scheme is a huge success

The South Moor experience underlines the success of the Get into Golf promotion

The Durham County Golf Partnership reckon more than 500 people have taken the opportunity to get into golf during the summer in Durham.

The scheme has met with huge success in making it easier than ever for would-be golfers to give the sport a try and changing the many traditional perceptions golf suffers from.

A total of 540 people in the 16-plus age category took part in free taster sessions or discounted coaching programmes as part of the nationwide Get into Golf campaign.

The Durham CGP established six adult starter centres at Billingham, Ramside Hall, Sharpley Springs, Stressholme, Sunderland Golf Centre and The Hobson and the scheme will be expanded this year, as well as Durham CGP maintaining its interest in supporting future talent by again running the Race 2 Rockcliffe order of merit.

Last year, a total of 180 promising young players under the age of 21 competed in the 15 qualifying events, as well as 80 in its feeder order of merit, The Srixon Junior Golf Tour for younger players, which is made up of four nine-hole events.

Tom Smith, from Eaglescliffe, landed the top prize last year at the magnificent Hurworth course when he returned a score of 74 against a par of 72 to claim the championship by two shots to add to his success in the gross category of the order of merit. The nett champion was 15-year-old Tom Skelton, from Beamish Park, who returned a level par score from his handicap of seven.

Another highlight was the region's first golf week and a floating green was set up on the River Tees at Stockton with people encouraged to take a shot at the flag from the river bank.

Teacher learns it's never too late

Doreen Bryce dedicated her working life to teaching others – now she has found that taking lessons of her own has opened up new horizons.

The Sunderland Castle View secondary school teacher took advantage of Durham County Golf Partnership's drive to encourage people to Get into Golf to become one of 14 new women members of the pro-active South Moor club.

The Get into Golf scheme offers free taster sessions and discounted lessons. South Moor and pro Shaun Cowell have always been enthusiastic backers of the scheme as it offers people of all ages and abilities to give golf a go.

Doreen, from Bournmoor, Chester-le-Street, Co Durham, retired after 40 years in teaching and decided to give the game a go at the age of 62.

She said: "The lessons were really enjoyable with plenty support from the ladies section and the professional, Shaun, who is amazingly patient. I have made some lovely friends with the other new starters and members."

Such has been Doreen's

enthusiasm for her new sport that she has not only joined the club, but has become involved in the ladies committee as treasurer.

Doreen, whose husband David plays golf while son Andrew is a pro at Quail Hollow in the USA, added: "The lessons came along at the right time for me to fill the gap left from working full-time.

"I took advantage of joining the club and now have a handicap which has allowed me to play in the club competitions, which have been great fun."

Doreen was not alone in signing up for the lessons at South Moor – which is based at The Middles in Craghead, Stanley, Co Durham, and which hosted the English Boys Under 16 Championship last year.

She was joined by Angela Page, who has played tennis for 30 years at Shotley and Benfieldside and has also been involved in coaching the sport – but she had always wanted to give golf a go.

"On family holidays I would always have a go on the driving range," she said, "and I really loved hitting that little white ball, but always came home frustrated at not knowing how, where or when I

could get started in the game.

"I had been concerned about the equipment needed to play, the cost of club fees and would I like it enough to justify spending quite a sum of money.

"I saw an advert for free golf sessions at South Moor. The words 'ladies only' and 'equipment supplied' caught my eye. The lessons were fantastic. They were so relaxed. It was nice to meet other ladies who wanted to try a new experience."

Angela, from Shotley Bridge, took advantage of the special membership offers available at South Moor, adding: "I can honestly say it was the best thing I have done.

"If it wasn't for the funding from Durham County Golf Partnership I don't think I would have started to play. Now I have made a fantastic group of friends who I play with on a regular basis. I have played in some of the ladies competitions – and even came joint first in a mixed competition!"

Jonathan Ward, county development officer for the Durham County Golf Partnership said: "These schemes show it is never too late – or too early – to take up golf and thanks to the work going on across the region anyone interested in trying the sport can find the right introduction to suit them."

To find out more to to the website www.getintogolf.org call 0800 118 2766 or visit www.durhamgolfpartnership.com



Oulton Hall

Merit in changing the order of things

It's back to the future for the PGA North Region which has restructured its schedule and halved the Order of Merit tournaments to five.

Two of the tournaments will be in Yorkshire in successive weeks in August – the De Vere Leeds Cup at Oulton Hall on August 21-22 and the Yorkshire PGA Masters at Sandburn Hall on August 28-29.

In the restructuring, pro-ams will no longer count for ranking points. Regional secretary Graham Maly explained: "We have returned to our former tried and trusted method because it's much fairer and more manageable. The inclusion of pro-ams in recent years was not popular with many of our professionals who could not afford the time to compete in them."

Tour Schools on both sides of the Pennines, at Bolton and Normanton in April, will determine qualification for the main events which are the PGA North Region Championship and Leeds Cup, both sponsored by De Vere, the Manchester Open, James Brearley Lancashire Open and the Sandburn tournament.

Maly added: "The overall number could increase to six because we are hoping to announce a tournament in the North East. It's such a huge

golfing area it is important that it figures in our schedule.

"The four PGA counties play a big part in the region and we are determined to recognise the fact by staging an event in all of them."

Several years ago, three Order of Merit ranking tournaments were all in the North-East – the Sunderland Masters at the George Washington course, the Wansbeck Classic at Bedlingtonshire and the Woodham Classic at Woodham Golf and Country Club.

A record five tournaments, an increase of two on previous years, for assistant professionals will provide more chances for the young pros to showcase their talents and help them to secure their futures.

Maly said: "It's crucial that our assistants compete against each other because they are obliged to return seven cards in each of the three years they are in training."

Yorkshire, with the greatest number of clubs, will stage two events with Ilkley hosting the curtain-raising North Region Assistants' Championship on May 3.

Other fixtures, will be at Rockcliffe Hall on July 4, at Helsby on July 18, at Bolton on August 15 and the 36-hole Harold Lees Trophy at Dore and Totley on September 2-3.

MAIN RANKING EVENTS

18-19: De Vere PGA North Region Championship (Heron's Reach)

July 29-30: The Manchester Open (Marriott Worsley Park)

Aug 21-22: De Vere Leeds Cup (Oulton Hall)

Aug 28-29: Yorkshire PGA Masters (Sandburn Hall)

Sept 9-10: James Brearley Lancashire Open (Blackpool North Shore)

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Tour revisits top venues

Longhirst and Moor Allerton will get international exposure thanks to Europro

The Europro Tour is coming back to the region. Leeds course Moor Allerton and Longhirst Hall, Northumberland, will both stage tournaments in the August- September leg of the 2013 PGA Europro Tour.

The Europro Tour has played a vital part in the early careers of some of the biggest names in golf, including Nicolas Colsaerts, Ross Fisher, Louis Oosthuizen and Charl Schwartzel.

It promises to be an exciting year with a total prize fund of over £500,000 spread over 15 tournaments.

There is no sign of Hunley Hall, which staged the Sweetspot Masters, on the list of tournaments for 2013, but the final schedule is yet to

be confirmed. However, Longhirst, which put on the Sweetspot Classic last year, will host the tour on August 12-16 and the tour will move to Moor Allerton on September 23-27.

Head pro James Whitaker said: "We are extremely proud to be selected as a host venue for this prestigious tour and are anticipating a week packed full of excitement.

"This is our 90th anniversary year so it couldn't be better timed. Watch this space for details – we look forward to welcoming golfers and supporters from far and wide."

Moor Allerton will also be hosting the new English Tour on Aril 24-25. Backed by European Tour player Robert Rock, the English Tour is a series of 18 two round tournaments



Moor Allerton

and, like the Europro Tour, aims to be a stepping stone to the big time.

Competitors from the Europro and English Tour will find a quality course when they visit as Moor Allerton boasts a challenging 27 holes, designed in three loops of nine by renowned golf course architect Robert Trent Jones Senior.

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Course facing closure after plans approved

Mount Oswald golf course is facing closure after planners approved a controversial £200m development on the South Road site despite widespread objections.

Durham County Council's county planning committee has backed Banks Property's plans to build nearly 300 homes, accommodation for 1,000 students, offices and community facilities on the 95-acre site.

There is no provision for a golf course in the plans put forward by Banks and while the golf club membership no doubt agrees with those who have campaigned against the plans, there is little they can do as they do not own the clubhouse or the course which is run on a pay-as-you-play basis by North of England Estates.

Gordon Cessford, the Mount Oswald membership secretary, said:

"What future we have is unknown. Needless to say, we would like to stay together, but that is somewhat impractical. Some will give up, some will just pay at the likes of Knotty Hill, some of the remainder will join courses nearer to their homes. Our future is bleak but we haven't given up just yet!"

It was an uncertain future that prompted the Durham City club, which had moved from Pinkerknowle to Mount Oswald in the 1920s, to leave South Road and move to Littleburn in 1974 although the course continued to operate under the ownership of North of England Estates as a pay-as-you-play operation, but also with a club membership option.

It has been the subject of constant speculation and several attempts at redevelopment and a previous bid by Banks, based in



Mount Oswald looks certain to be lost to housing

nearby Meadowfield, was withdrawn after concerted public opposition.

The new application also met with plenty of opposition including Durham City MP Roberta Blackman-Woods who described the proposal as "inappropriate" while Councillor Nigel Martin, who represents Neville's Cross, said: "My community is overwhelmingly against this. What does Durham get apart from private houses and student beds?"

"They are providing no tennis courts, no BMX track or skate park,

no usable recreation space to fly a kite or kick a ball.

"The green space will be locked in behind millionaires' electronic gates."

However, the city council's planning committee voted by 10-4 to follow planning officer Alan Herbert's recommendation and accept the proposal.

More than 2,000 people signed a petition against the scheme and Dr Blackman-Woods is considering referring the matter to the Secretary of State or pursuing a judicial review.

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TEEING OFF



➤ Newbiggin Golf Club

Cash boost for seaside course

National Lottery Funding brings a hole lot extra for the members of Newbiggin Golf Club

Newbiggin Golf Club has secured Olympic legacy funding from Sport England's Inspired Facilities Fund.

Newbiggin, which is the second oldest club in Northumberland and has a history going back over 125 years, will receive £50,000 of National Lottery funding to assist in the development of two new holes on its links course.

The new holes will initially provide a bespoke practice area for new members to golf and to eventually replace two holes which have been identified by Natural England as land that will be lost to coastal erosion in the near future.

The Inspired Facilities fund is part of the £135m Places People Play legacy programme that is bringing the magic of a home Olympic and Paralympic Games into communities across the country.

Every sports facility that receives funding will carry the London 2012 Inspire mark – celebrating the link to the Games

Over the years, Newbiggin has produced many county champions and also a number of players who have gone on to play professional golf.

Sport England's Chair, Richard Lewis, said: "This National Lottery investment will create a lasting

sporting legacy for Newbiggin. This fund has really hit the mark with sports clubs in the North East.

"It shows we're offering the legacy that people want for their local community. For hundreds of clubs and tens of thousands of people, 2013 will be the year their local sports facilities got better."

Club chairman John Bell said: "We are delighted to have secured this investment, which means we can improve and upgrade our golf course as we strive to continue to provide excellent facilities for our future generations of golfers on the links course at Newbiggin. It is the cornerstone of our strategy to ensure that Newbiggin Golf Club continues for at least another 125 years."

Local MP, Ian Lavery has fully added his support to the development and said: "This investment by Sport England into Newbiggin Golf Club is fantastic news. Newbiggin has always had a strong golfing tradition within the local community and this money is an investment in young people for today and for the future; we'll see prospective top class golfers training in top class facilities."

The development at Newbiggin is one of hundreds of projects across England benefiting from lottery investment through the second round of the Inspired Facilities fund.

Percy Wood aims to take on the best

With the departure of Peter Ritchie to Sheffield, David O'Brien has been appointed to the Percy Wood team, bringing with him over 10 years experience of first class coaching.

Simon Olver, the course manager at Percy Wood, is looking forward to working closely with David. He said: "I am very excited to work with him. His professional attitude towards the game is innovative, bringing with him a wealth of new ideas and techniques which will ensure that the David O'Brien Golf Academy becomes one the North East's top teaching facilities."

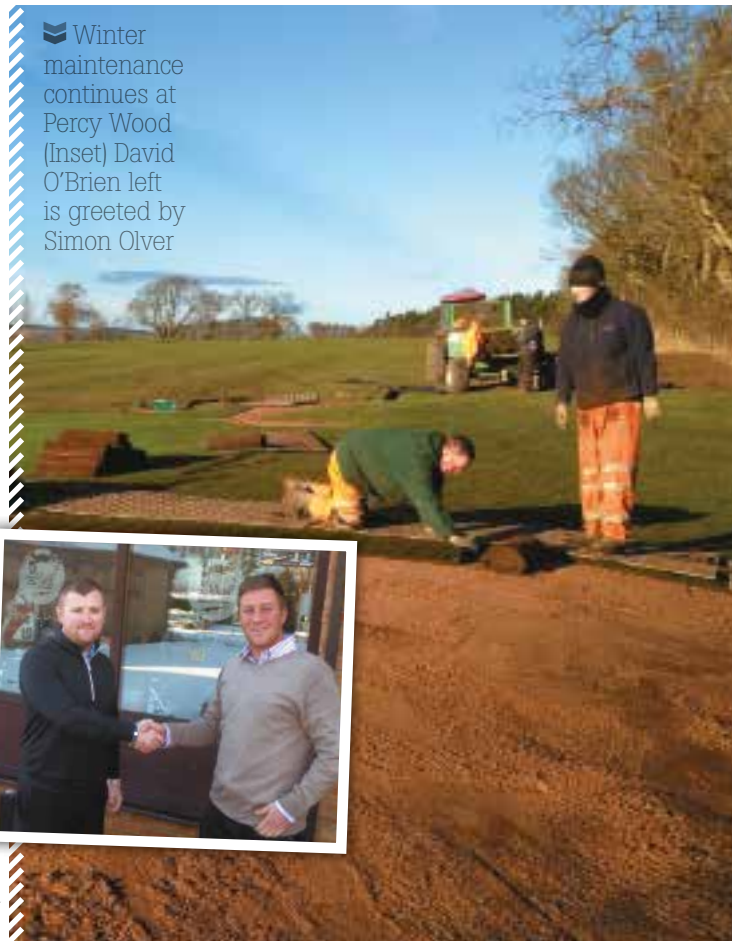
David only began playing golf at the age of 16. He showed an immediate aptitude for the game and rapidly achieved a low single figure handicap with help from a local PGA professional.

And with significant investment in the Percy Wood course members at the Northumberland club are looking positively to the future.

Simon Olver added: "As a company we continue to invest heavy in the course understanding the continued need to improve standards and facilities.

Further drainage work has been carried out over the winter months although most of our time has been focused on the fourth hole - a new enlarged teeing area has been built along with a totally redesigned green complex which includes an enlarged green, numerous new well placed bunkers and a pond.

The competition tee has been brought forward 60 yards to 275 yards and there has been further improvements to our driving range facilities."



Winter maintenance continues at Percy Wood (Inset) David O'Brien left is greeted by Simon Olver



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Houghton's no walk in the park

The ups and downs of Houghton prove to be a test, a joy and an excellent day's golf on a gem of a course for Alan Hedley



Durham County boasts a rich variety of golf courses and there are some real gems especially when it comes to parkland layouts.

One such gem is Houghton which maintains a proud reputation for a friendly welcome and an enjoyable, if testing game of golf.

Wind is simply a fact of golfing life in the North East and Houghton is no different, but several thousand trees have been planted over the years and they have given real definition to add to spectacular views and the par 72 6,381-yard Copt Hill course is a joy to play.

It is undulating, but far from punishing. However, some may want to consider a buggy or a powered trolley, although you may wonder why as there is a fairly gentle start with a couple

of shortish par fours. But there is out-of-bounds all the way down the right of both holes and the second will be quite a tempting short dog-leg for the big hitters and it's followed by a nice uphill par three which needs a bit more club than you think to clear the bunker.

A cracking long par four with a blind tee shot with trees to the right follows and a sloping fairway while there's another sloping fairway at the next, with a narrow entrance to an undulating tricky green protected by bunkers left and right.

There's a tricky tee shot with danger left and right at the sixth. The big hitters will be tempted to have a go but there are bunkers in front of the green and water in the gully to the left.

Another long par four follows and, along with nine and 10, it's considered by many to be one

of the best holes at Houghton. You do need to be straight here as there's plenty of trouble with trees and thick rough and a sloping green, but it's a classic par four and the signature hole.

You need to be straight at the next as well – a long short hole of over 200 yards played downhill but it has out-of-bounds down the right and behind the green.

The first par five has a water hazard all the way down the right and three ditches to contend with as well as three fairway bunkers up the left, so it may not be long but it's tricky and needs to be played sensibly.

The second consecutive par five is longer, not by much but it does have a difficult tee shot with trees to the left and another water hazard up the right and with a ditch protecting the green going



Three further holes were added but it was not until 1980 that the course was extended to 18 holes. A new irrigation system followed along with strategic tree planting over two decades and a new clubhouse in their centenary year. It's given the club a lovely welcoming base with a splendid professional's shop with Graeme and Amanda Robinson at the helm. There are also individual lessons, video analysis, custom fitting and one of the best stocks of club and clothing in the North East. The club has been awarded Golf Mark status.

FACT FILE

CONTACT

Houghton-le-Spring Golf Club
Copt Hill, Houghton-le-Spring, Tyne and Wear, DH5 8LU.
Telephone: 0191 5841198. Fax: 0191 5840048. Professional: 0191 584 7421
E mail: houghton.golf@btconnect.com
Website: www.houghtongolfclub.co.uk

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CADDY'S TIP

Keep it on the fairway. There's no reward in being in trees and the rough.

SIGNATURE HOLE

There are at least three candidates, but it has to be the seventh; a long classic par four framed by trees and thick rough with a sloping green and a nasty bunker. You have to hug the right to make anything out of this hole, but it is a cracking test.

Founded in 1908 with a membership of 74, Houghton started life as a nine-hole course

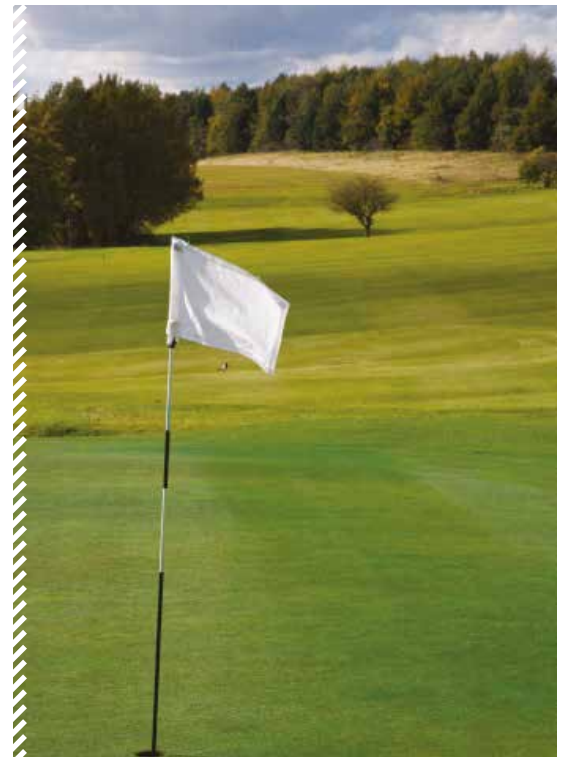
for it in two is probably not on, especially as there are also three deep bunkers in front of the green.

There's the chance to let rip at 11 as it's under 300 yards but watch out for the ditch on the left and it's a hole also considered by many to be one of the best on the course.

The test at 12 is dealing with the ravine and a two-tier green while 13 has out-of-bounds left, a steep fairway around the dogleg to manage and there's another dogleg to contend with at 14 and 15 is a dangerous par three with three bunkers.

It's not an easy finish either with a tough tee shot at the tight 16th with trees lining both sides and a sloping green and there's plenty of trouble left and out of bounds right and the second shot uphill is key to a two-tier green at 17.

The final hole is a dog-leg right and out-of-bounds to contend with and the second shot is to a narrow green.

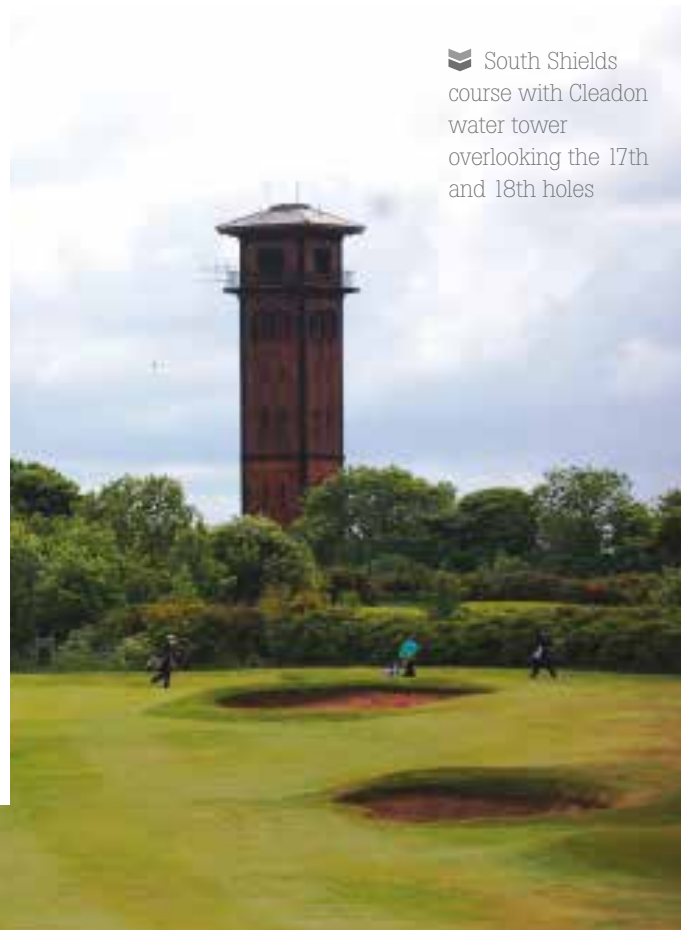


ALAN HEDLEY'S VERDICT

If there's ever such a thing a traditional style North East parkland course then Houghton is it and what it offers is an excellent day's golf that will never disappoint you.

Shields in control of own destiny

South Shields course with Cleadon water tower overlooking the 17th and 18th holes



South Shields has been demonstrating the best principles of self help in the re-building of its clubhouse.

When plans for a new £750,000 clubhouse alongside the 18th hit problems, the Cleadon club eventually decided to keep its current clubhouse which overlooks the final green, but to rebuild it with its own project manager Jim Stanley in charge along with club captain Allen Walker.

Club president Allen Bage said: "I have watched with admiration the tremendous work put in by Allen, Jim and the committee."

Describing the pair as "the club's highly-visible inseparable twins" in the club's newsletter, he adds: "We can

now see a refurbished professional's shop, a secure buggy store, a disabled toilet area, a new beer security area, a transformed bar room and numerous other changes."

Despite one or two nasty surprises, including unearthing an old cellar which meant expensive foundation work, the club are pressing on with plans to replace the clubhouse roof, windows and doors and upgrading the kitchen.

The club was established in 1893 and is located on the beautiful Tyne and Wear coastline in the shadow of the iconic Cleadon water tower and at just over 6,200 yards, it's always been a fair test - especially when the wind blows.



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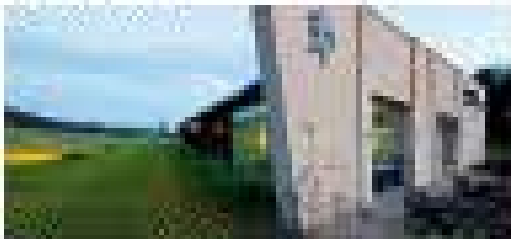
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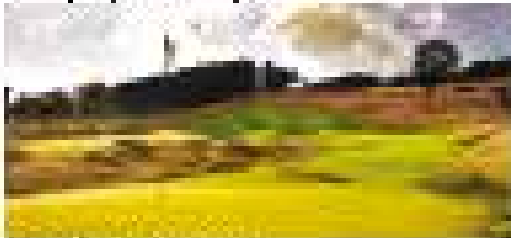
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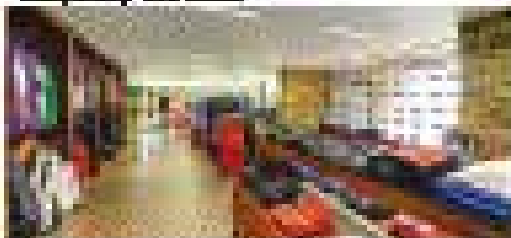
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TEEING OFF

Seaton's home comforts

Club captain David Lithgo
Lady captain Sue I'Anson
Junior captain Josh Goodrick



Seaton Carew is undergoing a major clubhouse refurbishment ahead of a busy year that will see the return of professional golf to the Durham County links.

And next year Seaton will be hosting the Brabazon Trophy – England's premier amateur strokeplay championship – which returns to the course after a gap of nearly 30 years.

One of the North East's best links courses, Seaton staged the Brabazon in 1985 when Peter Baker, who went on to become a Ryder Cup player, and Catterick's Roger Roper shared the title.

Since then the club has hosted the England Boys Carris Trophy and the Seniors Home Internationals and it has also hosted the British Boys Championship and numerous regional and county events.

Seaton is currently spending around £170,000 on new changing facilities in a complete overhaul which will see guest players incorporated into the main locker room rather than the small changing room the club had in the past.

New toilets, showers, lighting and carpeting will be installed along with top quality wooden lockers and there will also be new wooden lockers for the ladies section and the juniors will move into the old visitor locker room which will be redecorated.

Work started last month and is expected to be completed by the end of March, well ahead of the club's popular amateur scratch tournament, the Seaton Salver, which is also part of the North East Audi Masters Series and also a new pro tournament in the summer.

The English Tour will be staging a 36-hole event at Seaton on July 31-August 1. It will also be at Northumberland course Goswick on July 10-11 and making four visits to Yorkshire: Moor Allerton (April 24-25), Moortown (May 22-23), Alwoodley (June 19-20) and Ganton (Oct 2-3).

Backed by European Tour pro Robert Rock, the tour launched at The Belfry in March and will have 18 tournaments on the schedule. No doubt the English Tour player and competitors in the Seaton Salver and next year's Brabazon Trophy field will get to experience, Seaton's Brabazon Course – which was named after the 1985 event. It's the longest and most challenging of the different layouts the club can produce from the 22 holes available. Those holes are pretty special with 14 designed by the legendary Alister MacKenzie and four from the renowned Frank Pennink, the Brabazon is a true test of links golf.

MacKenzie, who went on to create such masterpieces as Augusta and Cypress Point, had the biggest influence and it's his 1925 layout which forms the basis of the club's Old Course.

The club also have three new captains at the helm in 2013. Club captain David Lithgo, lady captain Sue I'Anson and junior captain Josh Goodrick.

Hunting hosts major championship

Slaley Hall's Hunting Course will host the PGA's blue riband championship in June.

The Glenmuir PGA Professional Championship will be played over the Hunting Course on June 11-14 when a strong field will battle it out for the five remaining places on the Great Britain and Ireland PGA Cup team, ahead of the September clash against the United States also at Slaley.

The Northumberland venue will also stage the Glenmuir Women's PGA Professional Championship on June 13-14.

Daniel Hodson, director of golf at De Vere said: "The Glenmuir PGA Professional Championship kickstarts what is destined to be a memorable year of championship golf."

"The event precedes the PGA Cup matches, also at Slaley Hall and it speaks volumes about the quality of our courses and the strong relationship we share with the PGA."

Glenmuir's managing director Colin Mee said: "The championship is a highlight in our calendar and we hope PGA professionals

around Great Britain and Ireland continue to take part in such great numbers.

"With 2013 being a PGA Cup year and that event also being played on Slaley Hall's Hunting course, our final is a great opportunity for our home pros to acquaint themselves with the layout under competition conditions."

The Glenmuir Championships and the PGA Cup clash will help fill the gap left at Slaley with the PGA Seniors Championship moving on after a five-year tenure to another De Vere operation, Mottram Hall in Cheshire.

The PGA Cup is the Ryder Cup for club pros except it is Great Britain and Ireland who take on the Americans and it will be played over three days, starting on Friday September 20.

It would be a bonus to see a local player in the GB and Ireland team, but only five pros from the region have made it since the event began at Pinehurst, North Carolina, in 1973.

Matfen Hall's John Harrison in 1994 was followed by Steve McKenna (City of Newcastle), Graeme Bell (Eaglescliffe), Cumbria's Craig Goodfellow and Spike Nesbit (Westerhope).



WINNERS (left to right) Titleist PGA Play-Offs champion Richard Wallis, 2013 PGA Cup GB and Ireland team captain Russell Weir, Scott Henderson and David Higgins (courtesy of Matthew Lewis at Getty Images)

Turkish delight

Russell Weir left Turkey with a smile after seeing three big hitters secure their place in his 2013 team to face the USA at Slaley Hall.

The Great Britain and Ireland PGA Cup captain was at Antalya Golf Club to see Richard Wallis retain his Titleist PGA Play-Offs crown with David Higgins and Scott Henderson securing the other PGA Cup spots on offer.

Weir, who as a player made a record equalling eight PGA Cup appearances, is eager to avenge a defeat at the hands of America at CordeValle in 2011.

His 10-man team will be finalised after this year's Glenmuir PGA Professional Championship where a further five players will automatically qualify leaving a captain's pick for Weir to complete the line up.



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Race to the Belfry

Six top North East courses have been lined up for a new corporate golf series which leads to The Belfry, scene of three iconic European Ryder Cup victories.

Blue Hawk Events has scheduled a series of six tournaments "of tour standard" across the North East in what it is calling The Race To The Belfry and it's for teams of four playing in stableford format.

The venues are certainly of tour standard – Slaley Hall, Wynyard Hall, Close House, Matten Hall and Ramside Hall have all signed up and the organisers hope to confirm Rockliffe Hall soon.

Teams will play in all six tournaments and the top eight companies on the order of merit will



➤ The ninth hole in front of the Belfry Hotel

qualify for a Ryder Cup style final at The Belfry which includes two nights stay, bed and breakfast and three rounds of golf.

The package includes entry for four people, breakfast, 18 holes, buffet lunch, presentation, prizes for

top three teams at each event plus hole sponsorship including tee and greenside signage and company logo on BlueHawkEvents.com website plus a link to the company website.

There's also an end-of-series gala dinner plus invitations to networking

nights and Par three Networking Days, which includes champagne reception and lunch at Matten, Close House and the As You Like it bar and restaurant in Newcastle, along with simulator and driving range networking nights.

Blue Hawk Events may also be involved in the running the North East Masters series, but for more details on the Race to the Belfry contact Haris Khan on 07817 221425 or golfseries@bluehawkevents.com



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Catterick captain



➤ Layman Layton hands over captaincy to Jim Gilmour.

Catterick's well-attended presentation night was highlighted by the official hand-over of the club captaincy.

Ladies captain Marion Palmer and club captain Layman Layton have both enjoyed their year and working with the members.

"I would say we have enjoyed every minute of it," said Layman, "and we'd probably do it again if ever the opportunity arose."

Both captains handed over the trophies during the evening with Marion presenting the ladies club champion Vickie Iveson with her trophy and Layman presenting the men's club championship trophy to John Doughty - both worthy winners.

The Club Captain's handover also took place when Layman handed over to Jim Gilmour for the next 12 months.

The club's annual meeting was also one of the shortest on record - lasting a mere 40 minutes with not a single contentious issue being discussed and the treasurer also reported a profit for the second year running which in itself was a remarkably efficient effort given the bad weather that has made life difficult for many clubs over the last year.

New committee members voted in were: Chairman John Ross; Green Chairman Dennis McGregor; House Chairperson Marion Palmer; Vice Captain Steve May.

Rudding riding high

Harrogate's Rudding Park has scooped a top award for the third time in four years

Rudding Park hotel, spa and golf course in Harrogate has been voted number one hotel in the UK, second in the top hotels of Europe and fourth in the top hotels of the world in the TripAdvisor Travellers' Choice Awards 2013.

The recognition is based solely on the reviews and opinions from travellers gathered on the travel guide website www.tripadvisor.com.

Peter Banks, Managing Director at Rudding Park said: "Winning this national award three times in the last four years is a tremendous achievement. The fact we are also placed as a top hotel in Europe and the world is a wonderful accomplishment for the whole team.

"Travellers may use star ratings as a guide but it is TripAdvisor where genuine travellers express their opinions. These opinions then help other members of the TripAdvisor community make their choice with confidence. Hotels are

now judged on every guest's experience on a daily basis so there is nowhere to hide!

"I am extremely proud of every member of our team," said Banks. "We strive to provide the best possible value caring for our guests, within the highest quality environment."

Rudding Park is well known for the quality of its hotel and spa, based in the Grade 1 Regency house and surrounding parkland, but golfers also know it for its excellent 18 hole Championship course, designed by Hawtrees and its exceptional six hole Par 3 Repton Short Course, Golf Academy and floodlit driving range.

The island signature hole on the short course is a replica of Florida's notorious 17th at Sawgrass.

The parkland hole, the two woodland holes and the two water holes provide differing challenges.



➤ General Manager Pater Banks and his staff celebrate Rudding Park's award

On course to track income



GETTING ON COURSE (left to right) Steve Isaac, R and A Director of Golf Course Management, Kevin Weir, SGU Golf Services Manager, Paul Keeling, England Golf Club Services Manager, Phillip Russell, R and A Manager Golf Course Affairs at the CourseTracker launch.

Harrogate proved the perfect venue for the BIGGA Turf Management Exhibition with 6,000 visitors through the doors of the town's International Centre.

A series of education seminars and workshops were attended by a host of golf industry professionals while there was plenty of interest for the general public as well.

And among the successes was the launch of a free online system to help courses manage themselves more sustainably and efficiently, backed by the game's governing body, the R and A and BIGGA's own workshop "So You Want to be a Golf Course Manager."

Significant snow didn't deter the many delegates and hundreds of visitors enjoyed the Ryder Cup themed seminar featuring Medinah Country Club.

Meanwhile, the R and A officially unveiled CourseTracker which is designed for golf course managers and club secretaries to record the income derived from the course and what is spent on its maintenance.

The system allows clubs to monitor their performance over time and identify strengths, weaknesses and areas where savings could be made, say, in terms of energy and water.

CourseTracker also enables golf clubs to anonymously benchmark their performance against that of other clubs of a similar size in

their country. It produces accurate performance reports for the use of course managers and club secretaries and can be used to keep committees informed and to aid decision making.

It's endorsed by England Golf, the Golfing Union of Ireland, the Scottish Golf Union and the Golfing Union of Wales and Steve Isaac, director of golf course management at the R and A, said: "There is more pressure than ever on golf clubs to make the right decisions to manage golf courses sustainably, efficiently and cost effectively.

"CourseTracker can help them do that through recording, monitoring and reporting their activities and inputs. We know this is an area where many clubs struggle due to lack of time and resources. It's free, completely secure and can enable clubs to compare their performance on an anonymous basis with other clubs of a similar size and situation."

CourseTracker can be accessed online at www.coursetracker.org. Clubs need only spend a few minutes registering before using the system. It is simple to use and there are full online tutorials available for guidance.

A new website at www.golfeducation.co.uk providing a one-stop shop calendar for all those working in or volunteering in the golf industry was also launched during the week at Harrogate.

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➤ Last year's winners Stuart Graham and Neil Hirst

Pair up for Match Play

Entries open for popular competition

As winter moves closer to spring, it won't be long before the dark nights begin to get shorter, and with every golfer hoping for a much sunnier and drier 2013, it's time to get your entries in for the Northern Golfer Match Play Pairs Classic Tournament.

This competition is open to all male golfers who are members of golf clubs and have a current playing handicap.

Paul Corney, Tournament Organiser at Northern Golfer says: "This is a wonderful chance

for local players to enjoy a great competition throughout the spring and summer months.

"The 2013 semi-finals are to be played at Tyneside Golf Club, the week commencing September 2 and a week later, the final will be staged at Stocksfield Golf Club.

"I have been involved for many years in organising regional match play knock-out tournaments and I know that golfers love to play this type of format – they get to play different courses throughout the region and in doing so, make many new friends.



"We hope to be publishing details of a brand new Readers Holiday Tournament Week to be staged in Spain or Portugal later in the year and the winners of the Match Play Pairs will receive a week of competition golf as their prize.

"We are currently in negotiations for this prize and hope to be able to reveal details in the next edition of Northern Golfer."

So don't delay, you could be our 2013 champions and enjoying a top prize in amateur golf - but you've got to be in it to win it!

NORTHERN GOLFER GENTS MATCH PLAY PAIRS RULES 2013

1. A Pairs Match Play competition to be run in conjunction with Northern Golfer for its readers within its circulation area.
2. Entry forms, illegible or incorrect may result in the entrants being disqualified.
3. At each match, if courtesy is not given, green fees will be shared by both home and away teams.
4. All entry forms are to be directed to Northern Golfer with the entry fee.
5. The minimum age for the competition is 18, there is no maximum.
6. The maximum handicap is 24.
7. Matches to be played using 3/4 of the difference of the handicap taken from the lowest handicap.
8. Matches to be played off the tees of the day - (Home players may choose between yellows or whites depending on club policy).
9. This competition is open to Golf Club members with a valid handicap.
10. Handicap certificates should be available at all matches for opponents to inspect if requested.
11. No player can enter the competition more than once.
12. Once a team has registered their home club, they cannot transfer to another club without notifying Northern Golfer and a transfer will only be accepted once a check has been made that the players have fully complied with COGNO handicapping rules.
13. The home drawn pair to offer three dates and times to their opposition.
14. No extensions will be given.
15. In the event of being unable to arrange a date, both teams will be disqualified.
16. Should a match be tied after 18 holes, the result will be decided by a sudden death play off commencing at the 1st hole.
17. A panel consisting of representatives from Northern Golfer will adjudicate any disputes in conjunction with the Rules Office of the R & A. Their decision will be final.
18. No correspondence will be entered into.
19. The prizes are not transferable.
20. DMD's are permitted
21. All players must agree to being photographed and included in Northern Golfer should the occasion arise.
22. The Semi-Finals and Final are to be played during the first two weeks of September 2013
23. Date and venue of the Tournament Holiday Week has yet to be confirmed.
24. Closing dates for entries is - 31st March 2013.

For your chance to win a top prize in amateur golf, simply fill in the application form and send it to:
Tournament Organiser, Northern Golfer, Offstone Publishing, Unit 1, Bearl Farm, Stocksfield, Northumberland NE43 7AL
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EMAIL

PARTNER

HANDICAP

PLAYER NAME

GOLF CLUB

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EMAIL

Golfplan announces sponsorship of the PGA Pro-Captain



Ingla Beale (Canopus), Sandy Jones (PGA), Douglas Young (Golfplan) Roger Harvey (Golfplan) [pic, Getty Images]

Golfplan International Golf Insurance is set to further raise its profile by sponsoring one of The PGA's most prestigious tournaments.

The golf insurance provider has signed a three year agreement to become title sponsor of the popular PGA Pro-Captain Challenge which each year attracts entries from more than 500 UK clubs. This program tournament will include ten regional finals and a £25,000 grand final set to be staged overseas. PGA chief executive Sandy Jones commented: "It was with great delight that I met with Golfplan and listened to their intentions to support our PGA members in their everyday business which in today's economic world is much-needed and very welcome."



Baidon's triumphant 8-15 side, and right Joy Griffin

Joy for triumphant Baidon teams



Yorkshire course announces the club's first woman president after an impressive year which saw them complete a fantastic treble

Baidon sealed a triumphant year by doing its bit to prove golf is changing its image as a male-dominated world.

The West Yorkshire course has announced that Joy Griffin will become the club's first woman president next year. Joy was asked to be this year's vice president, which means she will become president in 2014 and the club's first woman president in its 116-year history.

Meanwhile, the club held a special celebration to a superb treble last year when it won the Bradford Union Scratch League, the Bradford 8-15 Association and the Bradford Rabbits Association titles. Now the club is

wondering if it has ever been done before.

It has dominated the scratch League over the last decade winning the title six times, while they also won the 8-15 league in 2007 and Baidon's rabbits latest Division A title is its fourth in seven years.

The club is keen to attract new members and anyone is welcome to contact the secretary on 01274 584 266 for more information on special offers.

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School provides a valuable lesson for the year ahead

John Parry has won back his place on the European Tour and he tells Alan Hedley how he aims to learn from past mistakes

Everyone deserves a second chance, but the key is making the most of it. And John Parry has no intention of squandering another opportunity to re-ignite his European Tour career.

The 26-year-old from Yorkshire is back in the big time after a stellar performance at the Qualifying School where he blew away the opposition - much as he did three years ago with his maiden tour win in the Vivendi Cup.

Parry's progression to winning professional seemed natural after several high-profile wins such as the Welsh, Danish and Spanish amateur titles and Walker Cup honours.

There were a couple of blips after turning professional at the end of 2007 as he, naturally, took a little time to adjust to the paid ranks, but victory in the 2009 Challenge Tour Allianz Golf Open Grand Toulouse was followed by that 2010 Vivendi Cup and he was back on course although he'd left it a bit late.

He was right on the cusp of the top 115 heading towards the tail end of the season but his maiden victory in Paris gave him a much-needed year's exemption on tour.

The previous week he'd led going into the final round of the Austrian Golf Open only to finish tied 20th but two weeks after his Vivendi Cup win he led at the Alfred Dunhill

Links Championship before finishing third and 51st in the rankings.

It was a given by most pundits he would kick on in 2011 and make a big name for himself on tour, but it didn't happen.

Parry's progress stalled and nothing much happened during a dispiriting year-long battle to keep his card which was lost after he finished 126th in the rankings.

It didn't look good last year either when he played with limited success on the Challenge Tour, but a change of approach, on and off the course, turned things around at the end of the year and he hit a rich vein of form.

It all came to a peak at the PGA Catalunya Resort where he won the Tour Qualifying School to return to the big time, and the chance to make the most of a second chance.

"That's very much the case as far as I'm concerned," said Parry, currently on the Middle East swing of the European Tour. "Last year was an eye-opening experience. I realised what I was missing out on and wanted very much to get back on the main tour. As it turned out, I did leave it until the very last minute, but better late than never I guess!

"The bonus of winning the Tour School taught me that I could play to that level on two very tough courses in harsh conditions and it's made me believe I can pretty much handle anything. »



"Last year was an eye-opening experience. I realised what I was missing out on"

JOHN PARRY

» “Six rounds on the bounce with everything on the line is a pretty solid test of your mental and physical capabilities. To win it like I did showed to me that I was on the right track and now I have to build on that.”

“Yes, it was disappointing to lose my card, but I had to get over that negativity pretty quickly and learn from my mistakes and work through my flaws. My focus was twofold...work out and work on my swing issues with my coach Mark to rebuild my confidence. Secondly, to build a team around me that allows me to concentrate on playing. They take care of everything else. It’s not about having hangers on or anything like that. It’s about having people who know exactly what they’re doing and have my best interests at heart.”

Key figures in Parry’s backroom team are long-time coach Mark Moore, manager Nigel Cummings and fitness guru and sports science specialist Rob Hobkinson, who accompanied Parry to the qualifying school.

Parry turned to Hobkinson, also a PGA professional, who was working as a consultant for Wetherby-based Sports Science Solutions to help him prepare for the rigours of playing on tour and Hobkinson gave him a strict fitness and weights regime carefully developed following biomechanical, nutritional and physiological analysis.

“There’s no point going into the gym and lifting weights just to tick a box,” said Hobkinson. “The regime John has embarked on with us is undoubtedly helping prevent fatigue on the course. We saw that in the six days of qualifying school. As everyone was tiring after 108 holes, John could have played on”

In a gruelling schedule of 25 tournaments or more, that fitness – physical and mental – could prove crucial. “Besides building strength and stamina, Rob has given me clear direction on how I should maintain my lifestyle when on the road, which is key because it is so easy to fall into small habits that can become big ones really quick,” said Parry.

“My day-to-day and week-to-week is very structured now. I know exactly what I should be doing and when I should be doing it. And Rob’s a good bloke....he gives me the chance to have a cheat day once in a while and I don’t miss those opportunities when they step up!

“I don’t think a tournament victory is out of the question this year. I did it during my rookie year in 2010

» John Parry’s career is back on track after a tough time outside the European Tour.



so there is absolutely no reason why that can’t happen again. I’m better prepared now.”

He showed that in his clinical and comprehensive win at the Tour School. “Starting the last day with a four-shot lead it does cross your mind for a split second it could all go wrong, but that is all before you play.

“When you get a few pars under your belt you settle down. It is not your normal event and people aren’t as chatty but having Rob there I didn’t chat much to the other players.

“Hopefully, I won’t have to go back to Q School but it was probably the least amount of pressure I am ever going to feel there.

After the fifth round I pretty much knew I had my card so

it was then just trying to win.”

Born in Harrogate and raised in Knaresborough, Parry can still remember when he was first introduced to the sport.

“My mum and dad Mark and Denise don’t play golf but my uncle does and I probably first played when I was about six when we lived in Birmingham,” added Parry. “He gave me and my brother a golf lesson and when we moved to Knaresborough it just started off there.”

He eventually joined the Harrogate club after taking lessons there and was based there for much of his amateur career and still regularly visits the Forest Lane Head club who are, naturally, very proud of his success of which, it seems certain, there is more to come.

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Westwood's search for region's promising young golfers

Scholarship scheme bearing star's name is launched for boys and girls aged 12 to 16

Lee Westwood has further strengthened his ties with Northumberland's Close House by announcing a golf scholarship scheme for boys and girls aged 12 to 16.

The world No 8 is remaining attached to the club even though he has moved home from Nottingham to Florida.

Westwood said: "I am delighted these new scholarships are bearing my name.

"The young golfers who earn them – one boy and one girl – will be able to enjoy the finest practice facilities in the North East of England.

"I have got to know the staff fairly well at Close House, having enjoyed playing there quite a few times.

"The atmosphere is spot on and there's a great feel about the place.

"They pay enormous attention to detail and they have excellent main coaches in Jonathan Lupton and Sally Hinton, who really know their stuff."

The scholarship scheme is organised by Jonny Greenwood, Close House golf operations manager.

The winning boy and girl will each be awarded The Close House Lee Westwood Scholarship.

This entails a year's free club membership, free range balls, free monthly golf lessons for a year, a free Close House golf bag and cap plus a chance to meet Westwood.

The scholarship players will be able to use both the Colt and Filly courses and their names will go on an honours board in the golf academy.

The whole process is free and applications close on Monday, March 11. Applications to Close House must be made by phone or email to golf operations manager Jonny Greenwood on 01661 852953 or jonathan.greenwood@closehouse.co.uk. Juniors will be assessed initially over a 20-minute session at the golf academy over the weekend of March 16 and 17. Players must be aged 12-16 on the date of their initial assessment. The top six boys and top six girls will be invited back to a more intense assessment on Saturday, March 23. The top boy and top girl will each be awarded The Close House Lee Westwood Scholarship.

Lee Westwood's scholarship will give youngsters a chance to shine

Charity Role for Lee

Lee Westwood has joined the Board of Trustees of the Tour Players Foundation (TPF), the charitable foundation of The European Tour and its Members. He takes over from Paul Eales, who has sat on the Board of Trustees from 2009.

The 39-year-old Englishman, winner of 22 European Tour titles and leading European money winner in 2000 and again in 2009 under the current Race to Dubai format, joins Chairman Mark Roe as a players' representative on the seven-strong Board of Trustees.

Westwood, a strong supporter of charitable causes during his prodigiously successful career, will reinforce the message of the importance of charity through professional golf and more specifically The European Tour.

The TPF's mission is to fund raise for and make donations and grants to voluntary bodies and charities, particularly those assisting children and young people in the regions where European Tour events are held.

Mark Roe, chairman of the TPF, said: "The Tour Players' Foundation is very proud to have Lee Westwood join the Board of Trustees. Lee needs no introduction as a player, he is a Ryder Cup hero and a former World Number One, but it is very important we join together and give back charitably, as the ongoing message of the TPF is 'Changing Children's Lives Through Golf'.

Westwood said: "I'm very pleased to be offered the opportunity to represent the Players board. It's important for the Tour as a whole to support charity in the regions we visit and we as players are in a strong position to make a difference to lives of others especially children and young people."





➤ Graeme Bell

Bell tolls for Graeme's hopes

Hartlepool golfer just misses out in his bid to play on the European Seniors Tour

Hartlepool's Graeme Bell missed out on his dream of playing on the European Seniors Tour this year after leading at the halfway stage of the qualifying school in Portugal.

The 49-year-old Eaglescliffe pro shot 69 and 66 in the first two rounds on the Pinta course in Pestana to lead by three, but he was 10 shots worse in his third round and shot 73 in the fourth and final round to miss out on a top six spot and a place on the tour alongside Matfen Hall's John Harrison.

He eventually finished in a three-way tie for 14th place which will give some starts on the tour, but said: "I should have done better but, taking into account two qualifying rounds, I cannot be disappointed with level par for six rounds at a strange course with fast greens in January."

Former Wallsend and Bedlington player Jeff Matthews, Rockcliffe's Roger Roper and Slaley's Steve McNally also missed out.

It was a superb putting performance that saw Bell lead at halfway as he plundered seven birdies in his 66.

Bell's front nine was a measured affair, as he mixed two birdies with a bogey at the sixth hole, but a further gain at the tenth hole was the cue for a birdie blitz on the back nine, as he raced home in just 33 shots.

"I didn't hole any huge putts," he said. "The longest one I made was from about 20 feet and the rest were all from makeable range, but you don't

normally hole all of them, so it was just one of those days on the greens you get every now and then. The last two birdies were a case in point – they were tricky downhill putts and I would've been happy to get down in two, but they both dropped in to round off a very nice day."

Bell's been a regular winner on the NE and NW PGA circuit and the PGA North Region tour and also played in the 2003 Great Britain and Ireland side against the USA in the PGA Cup – the club pros' version of the Ryder Cup.

With more than 30 pro-am victories to his name, plus two NE and NW PGA Championships, two NE and NW PGA Matchplay crowns, two NE and NW PGA Order of Merit wins, two Northumberland and Durham Opens, three Cumbrian Masters, and a Brough Classic win, it's not surprising he has been named NE and NW PGA Player of the Year twice.

As an amateur, Bell won 75 caps for Durham, only Whickham's Tony McLure - who also has designs on the seniors tour - is believed to have more.

There were a few raised eyebrows when Bell decided to turn pro in 1997 at the relatively late age of 34 but he proved the doubters wrong with success on the local NE and NW PGA circuit, topping the order of merit more than once and also winning on the North Region tour.

And few would bet against him making on to the seniors tour eventually and ending up in the winner's circle there.

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Warm welcome at Sandburn

It's a young course, but Sandburn has established itself as one of Yorkshire's best, discovers Alan Hedley

Sandburn Hall has swiftly been recognised as one of the most attractive and welcoming courses in Yorkshire.

Set in the beautiful Vale of York, the 6,723 yard par 72 lay-out has only been open eight years, but it is a real joy with woodland, streams and lakes providing a wonderful backdrop and providing a haven for many forms of wildlife.

Sandburn prides itself on being visitor friendly and the welcome in its lovely clubhouse incorporating the Tykes Restaurant, Sports Hall, Sports Bar and halfway house is everything you could wish for.

The course is also user friendly with two loops of nine, both starting and finishing close to the clubhouse and it will test both your accuracy and your mind-set as many of the hazards and

bunkers are subtly placed - a course planner is a good investment!

Not many courses start with a par five of 540 yards and with trees all along the right, this opener will be a genuine three-shotter for most.

The first of several dog-legs comes at the par four second with three bunkers waiting to catch the errant drive and three more at the green front while the third is the first of some long dog-leg par fours at 421 yards.

The temptation will be to try and cut the corner but there are a trio of bunkers waiting on the elbow and the next is another dog-leg with a cluster of fairway bunkers plus another three around the green. If there's a hole which epitomises the need for clear thinking at Sandburn, it's the fifth, a shortish par four of 346



yards. There are three small bunkers at about 230 to 250 yards, but you can't see them from the tee. I'm usually not a fan of hidden bunkers, but there's no doubt they add to the quality of this hole.

It prompts thinking of a lay-up rather than banging away with the driver, but the big hitters will think they can fly the trouble. The choice is yours.

The first of the par threes involves a tee shot over a lake which will also catch anything going right and it's a beauty and the signature hole. It is followed by a superb par four of 440 yards needing a long tee shot avoiding three fairway bunkers and a big second to green fronted by two more bunkers. The second of the short holes isn't that short at 201 yards but there is room behind the two bunkers short of the green if you don't catch it



quite right. Don't miss it right as there is a nest of five bunkers there.

The challenge at the par five ninth is with the second because there is plenty of water to avoid with a lake to the right which also comes into play behind the green. Sensible club selection will pay off here.

There are birdie chances at 10 and 11 - both par fours of under 400 yards - while 12 is a shortish dog-leg left to right par five with a menacing lake waiting to catch anything leaking right and will leave you in doubt to go with the driver.

The short 13th is all about club selection to avoid three greenside bunkers and 14 is another cracking par four of 436 yards needing both a long straight drive and a strong approach to a triple-bunkered green.

It's followed by another strong par four of 400-plus yards with a stream running down the left, then crossing the fairway into a lake to the right of the green.

Both herald a strong finish with 16, although short for a par four at 366 yards having six bunkers in and round the green and water to the right.

The par five 17th is a beauty. Dog-legging left to right with trees left plus a stream along the right which crosses the fairway which then opens out into a lake to the front and side of the green. At 493 yards, it is reachable in two, but is the risk worth it, especially if you have a good card going?

And the last is a beautiful par three, with two huge oak trees and a stream running to the left hand side of the green at 163 yards over water it is a menacing finish which can be viewed by spectators on the balcony at the clubhouse.

FACT FILE

CONTACT

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CADDY'S TIP

Buy a course planner and leave the driver in the bag on some of those dog-legs

SIGNATURE HOLE

The first of the short holes on the course. At 174 yards, the sixth is usually into wind with a carry over water to well-bunkered green. It's very attractive hole, but it can make your scorecard less attractive. A little belter.

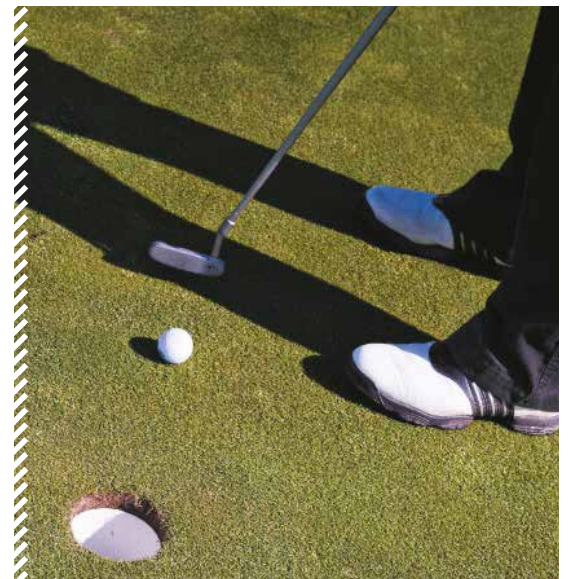
« With the appointment of Glenn Lowry as director of golf/PGA professional Sandburn has set out its stall. Sights are set on a hotel and spa complex in the not too distant future and Sandburn will look to host European Challenge and Tour events and cater for all needs of golf and leisure.

It's already an extremely popular wedding venue with a very busy calendar of events and it's been the venue for the Yorkshire PGA Sandburn Hall Masters since 2009 and will be so again this year.

Besides great clubhouse facilities, including its Sports Bar, renowned Tykes Restaurant and beautiful oak-framed Grand Function Hall, it's also the home of the Steve Robinson Golf Academy.

Steve coaches the English Ladies National and Northern squads as well as Yorkshire County men and boy squads and Yorkshire Ladies First Team. One of the country's top coaches in the UK, he was also appointed England Futures Coach in 2010.

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ALAN HEDLEY'S VERDICT

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Neil Reeves delivers a coaching lesson

Reeves takes director's role

Big plans for new director appointed at Yorkshire-based academy



Neil Reeves has been appointed new director of the Huddersfield-based John Letters Golf Academy.

Reeves spent nearly six years as Shay Grange teaching pro, but is relishing the challenge of his new role at the centre, which is based next to Huddersfield Town's soccer ground.

"It's a great honour to be the academy director at such a fantastic facility here at the Stadium," said Reeves, "and I can't wait to give some of my expertise and experience to the golfers in the area.

"I'd like to thank Shay Grange owner Jordan Gibson for his help and support," he said. "I've really enjoyed

my time and hope I played a part in the rehabilitation of Shay Grange."

Reeves steps in following the departure of Tom Denby and brings a wealth of experience, having started at his local club Nelson as an assistant 28 years ago.

He's worked with David Rushworth at West End, John Hammond at Ilkley as well as at Aberystwyth in Wales before going to Germany. At the end of the 1990s he started a long stint at Shay Grange Golf Centre in Bradford where he taught the likes of Steven Bottomley and has spent time working with some of golf's most recognised coaches – John Jacobs, David Leadbetter and Dennis Pugh.

For more information check out www.johnletters.com or contact Neil on 01484 452 564 or email neilreeves@johnletters.com

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Lawrie backs the ladies

New women's tour to launch in Scotland with the support of one of the country's golfing stars

A new women's golf tour backed by Open winner Paul Lawrie launches in Scotland in April.

The Paul Lawrie Golf Centre Scottish Ladies Open Tour will be launched at Marriott Dalmahoy's East Course with 14 tournaments modelled on 18-hole, one-day Alliance lines.

It will be open to women professionals and female amateurs with a single-figure handicap. The fledgling tour is also being supported by the R and A.

To save accommodation costs for players events have been divided into neighbouring pairs and will be played back-to-back with no day between.

For instance, Ratho Park will stage an Edinburgh double-header on Friday, April 19, the day after Dalmahoy.

The only 36-hole event will be the Tour

Championship over two days at Dalmahoy in October. The objective of the tour, which is being co-organised by Nicola Melville, PGA teaching professional at St Andrews, and golf writer Colin Farquharson is to provide a competitive platform for female players, professional and amateurs, to improve their game sufficiently to enable them gain pass marks at the Ladies European Tour Qualifying School.

An entry fee of £50 per tournament for both professionals and amateurs will go into the prize fund along with a £1,000 donation to each event from the Paul Lawrie Golf Centre.

Lawrie, Stewart Spence and Martin Gilbert, who are behind the Paul Lawrie Golf Centre in Aberdeen have no objection to any individual or company contributing to the prize fund at any of the tour venues.

Cup heads for Scottish show

The Ryder Cup, the trophy which was at the centre of one of the most memorable sporting comebacks of all-time last September, is on its way to the 2013 Scottish Golf Show.

The iconic gold prize will be on display at the ever-popular three-day annual show when it takes place from March 22-24 at the SECC in Glasgow.

Its appearance at the 2013 Scottish Golf Show is appropriate given that it will next be contested on Scottish soil, at Gleneagles in 2014, where Paul McGinley and Tom Watson will lead the European and American sides respectively.

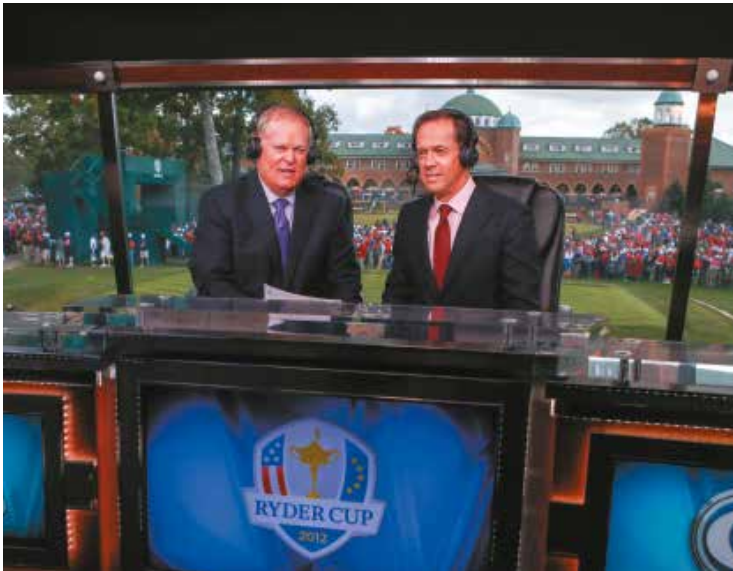
Show organiser Tom Lovering said: "Like most golf fans the world over, I was glued to the action at Medinah last year and was stunned and delighted by the European team's brave final day fight back. That incredible recovery demonstrated just how much this famous trophy means to those who contest it and so to have it on display at the 2013 Scottish Golf Show is a major boost as the clock ticks down on our return to Glasgow.

"We were already confident that the 2013 show would be one to remember and today's news has further affirmed that belief. I'd encourage every golfer in the country to come along and take this unique opportunity to see the spoils of the 'Miracle at Medinah' up close."

Mike Cantlay, chairman of VisitScotland, said: "In less than two years time, Scotland will welcome the world when we host one of the most exciting sporting events on the planet as the Ryder Cup descends on Gleneagles.

"The last event at Medinah truly captured the imagination for its sheer drama and whetted the appetite further for what we hope will be the best ever Ryder Cup in 2014. I'm delighted that the trophy at the centre of it all will be on display at the Scottish Golf Show and will help build pride and excitement among Scottish golf fans."

Scotland's Paul Lawrie competing in the Johnnie Walker Classic PGA European Tour golf tournament at Gleneagles



⚡ Golf Channel's Johnny Miller and Dan Hicks at the 2012 Ryder Cup. (Photo courtesy Scott Halleran/Getty Images)

TV boost for Open

The Aberdeen Asset Management Scottish Open will become the first regular European Tour event to be shown live on major United States TV.

NBC will broadcast live coverage on the final two days play from Castle Stuart this year and Royal Aberdeen next year when the Scottish Open takes place.

Until now, only the Majors, World Golf Championships and leading team events connected to The European Tour have been shown live

on American networks.

Alex Salmond, Scotland's First Minister, said: "This historic agreement with NBC and the Golf Channel will see the Scottish Open become the first regular European Tour event to be given prime-time coverage on US network television.

"It is a fantastic boost for Scottish golf and an incredible opportunity for Scotland to showcase the magnificent scenery of the Highlands and the fantastic golf on offer at Castle Stuart and across the country to tens of millions of US viewers."



Kings for the Queens of golf

Kingsbarns has been chosen to host Final Qualifying for this year's Ricoh Women's British Open.

Qualifying will be held on July 29 ahead of the Championship proper which will be played for the second

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Swimmer switches strokes

World champion Michael Phelps reaches a deal with manufacturer as he steps up his golf

World-champion swimmer Michael Phelps, one of the most accomplished athletes in the history of sport with more than 70 medals in international competition, has reached agreement with PING to play a full set of the company's custom-fit clubs as he focuses his athletic efforts on the game of golf.

Phelps is the subject of this year's "The Haney Project" on the Golf Channel, an eight-episode reality show documenting his efforts to improve his golf game under the guidance of renowned instructor Hank Haney.

The series premieres Monday, February 25, 2013. The native of Baltimore will play 14 PING clubs, including the new G25™ driver, fairway woods, hybrids and irons. For his short game, he'll rely on the new Tour Gorge™ Groove wedges and Scottsdale™ TR™ (True Roll) putter.

"I know how difficult the game of golf is, but I'm really serious about getting better," said Phelps, who first started playing golf five years ago. "They looked at my swing on the range and dialed me into clubs that perfectly fit my stance and swing. Considering how tall I am and the length of my arms, they showed me how important and beneficial it is that I play

with custom-fit clubs. Once I had clubs that were built specifically for me, my ball flight improved right away. PING has a long history of helping golfers play better, so I'm excited to see how much I can continue to improve my game with the help of their equipment."

PING's club technicians built his G25 irons one inch over standard length, three degrees upright and with grips 1/32-inch over standard size. PING Wrx, the company's custom shop, added a few special touches to the clubs, including painting the clubs with gold and red, white and blue accents.

"Michael is a legendary sports icon, and we all watched with great pride as he represented the United States while dominating his sport in international competition over the last decade," said John A. Solheim, PING Chairman and CEO. "We've custom-built his clubs to ensure he has every chance to improve and we believe he'll dedicate himself to golf with the same intensity he gave to swimming."

Phelps, 27, is widely recognised as the greatest swimmer of all time. Over the course of his 16-year career, Phelps amassed more gold medals, world championships, and world records than any other swimmer.

Michael Phelps has turned his attention to golf

Medal hopes



Sandy Jones

Golf in the Olympics was on the agenda at the recent PGA World Alliance gathering.

The PGA of Great Britain and Ireland hosted the meeting at PGA national headquarters at The Belfry and among the PGAs represented were those of America, Canada, Australia, South Africa, Sweden, Germany, Japan, New Zealand and the PGAs of Europe.

Other issues discussed by the 27 representatives included initiatives to grow the game of golf, the social, environmental and economic impacts of golf around the globe and ideas of best practice in junior golf.

PGA chief executive Sandy Jones said: "The meeting gave a wonderful opportunity for 10 of the leading PGAs in the world to discuss the challenges that the game of golf faces in all parts of the world. It was amazing to hear from all the delegates the very positive initiatives to ensure healthy growth at all levels in the game."

Golden touch

It was Sensational Sunday for Team GB golfers with a haul of medals at the Australian Youth Olympic Festival in Sydney – and a historic double gold for England's Georgia Hall.

She became Team GB's first gold medallist in an Olympic golf event for over 100 years when she won both the individual women's competition and team gold with compatriots Chloe Williams of Wales and the Scots pair Ewan Scott and Bradley Neil.

GB to win a record breaking 40 medals in a single day.



Ryder Cup captain Paul McGinley (Getty Images)

Irish hopes Ryding high

Irish golf is riding high with the appointment of Paul McGinley as next year's Ryder Cup captain.

Despite a late flurry of speculation, possibly influenced by Tom Watson's appointment as USA captain, McGinley always looked a cert for the role.

He had some powerful backing, including world number one Rory McIlroy and he is a hugely-respected figure on the European Tour.

He may not have the charisma of five times Open Champion Tom Watson, but he certainly has the credentials to lead Europe at Gleneagles on September 26 – 28 next year.

A four-time winner on the European Tour, he made three consecutive, and victorious, Ryder Cup appearances from 2002 – 2006 and will always be remembered as the man who holed the winning putt during his first appearance at the Belfry 11 years ago.

McGinley succeeds Jose María Olazabal with the aim of retaining the Ryder Cup following the Spaniard's brilliant stewardship of Europe's "Miracle at Medinah."

The 46-year-old McGinley was a vice-captain to Olazabal in Chicago last year, the same role he fulfilled for Colin Montgomerie's victorious 2010 Team at Celtic Manor.

"Obviously, I'm absolutely thrilled and delighted to have this honour," said McGinley. "I've been there many times as a player and also as a vice captain and I'm really looking forward to this opportunity."

"What I want to do as captain is continue the Seve legacy. I don't know how I'm going to go about that yet. I'll leave that for discussions later on but I will be continuing that legacy."

"Seve was a guy that I knew pretty well. I played under him as a captain. I've been very fortunate if you look at all the captains I've played under. I've played under Monty, I've played under Jose Maria and I've also played under Seve."

"I have a vast amount of experience playing under a Who's Who of European golf."

Five names were up for discussion as captain – McGinley, Sandy Lyle, Colin Montgomerie, Miguel Angel Jimenez and Paul Lawrie – Darren Clarke withdrew his name from the discussion.

There was also some discussion about whether there should be a rule that someone can be captain just the once and Thomas Bjorn, who is the Tour player's representative, said: "I don't think we'll ever make a rule, but there's a general feel that you should have one go at it."

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Lombard tees up return to PGA national Pro-Am

Club golfers and their PGA professionals will have an added incentive to put in some extra practice ahead of the coming season with the return of the popular Lombard Trophy.

The leading UK asset finance company Lombard has signed a three year agreement to sponsor the PGA National Pro-Am Championship culminating in a September grand final over Gleneagles' PGA Centenary course – host to the 2014 Ryder Cup.

The prize fund has been increased by £30,000 to £80,000 and features 16 regional finals with amateurs qualifying to team up with their club PGA pro by winning their local monthly medal or Stableford.

An exciting line up of regional final venues will start at Kedleston Park on June 3 and finish at Golf at Goodwood on July 29 with the following visits

sandwiched in between: Saunton, West Lincs, Kingswood, Orsett, Bovey Castle, The Island, Dunham Forest, Crieff, Ladybank, Kings Lynn, Fulford, Studley Wood, Machynys Peninsula and Little Aston.

Lombard raised the profile of the event having previously sponsored the tournament for 12 years from 1995 to 2006 when it regularly attracted entries from more than 1,100 golf clubs across the UK.

It will once again be known as the Lombard Trophy while an increased prize fund will see the winning pro receive £12,000 and the runner up £7,500.

PGA chief executive Sandy Jones said: "This is a unique event in that it offers PGA professionals a rare opportunity to team up with an amateur partner and represent their club in a national event."



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Tiger tamed by Rory on and off the course

Rory McIlroy has taken Tiger Wood's world number one spot. Now he's taken his mantle as Nike's brand ambassador making him one of the highest-paid sports stars.

Reported to be worth anywhere from £65m to £80m over five years, it's a massive deal and while Woods has been Nike's standard-bearer for 16 years, there seems to be no acrimony between the pair – there's even an advert on television with the pair playing up a supposed rivalry.

The 23-year-old from Holywood, County Down earned over \$13m in prize money last season and about \$12m-\$15m in endorsements and appearance money.

McIlroy has talked of the "ridiculous" money in golf after he had banked a \$3m bonus for finishing runner-up in the American Fed Ex Play-off series.

He said: "I feel very fortunate to be playing a sport in which the monetary

rewards are so high. But for me it's not about the money. I have always dreamt of playing golf simply to win big tournaments."

He has won two Major championships in his last two years, but this new multi-million dollar deal will only add to the pressure to deliver even more.

The deal came shortly after McIlroy was named winner of the Golf Writers Trophy for 2012 after a magnificent season.

The Northern Irishman topped the annual poll ahead of Europe's Ryder Cup team, Ian Poulter, Roger Chapman and the Great Britain and Ireland Curtis Cup team.

McIlroy won his second major title at the USPGA Championship at Kiawah Island by eight strokes, claimed four other victories, including the DP World Tour

Championship, Dubai with five birdies over the last five holes, and did the double of winning the money list on the USPGA Tour and the Race to Dubai title on the European Tour.

While McIlroy earned almost 50% of the first-place votes, the poll reflected the range of achievements by European golfers in 2012.

McIlroy also claimed a part of second place as a member Europe's Ryder Cup team. Captained by Jose Maria Olazabal and inspired by the late Seve Ballesteros, Europe engineered a thrilling comeback from 10-4 down to win by a single point at Medinah.

Also recognised was Great Britain and Ireland, which won the Curtis Cup for the first

time in 16 years and made history at Nairn by bringing all four of the main transatlantic trophies – Ryder, Solheim, Walker and Curtis Cups – to Europe for the first time.

« Rory McIlroy is golf's hottest property



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Take stock to avoid trouble

Through the trees of the front nine and the open space on the back nine, Paul Corney plots his way around Stocksfield

Neatly tucked away in natural woodland with marvellous views of the Tyne Valley and the Cheviots to the north, Stocksfield Golf Club offers a challenging 18-hole course combining tricky par threes and testing par fours.

The course is renowned for a game of two halves. The front nine are set in woodland with fairways meandering through a mixture of mature oak, ash, birch and beech trees, an interesting mix of holes with dog-legs in both directions dissected in a number of places with water hazards.

The back nine are the original holes and with the course opening up, you may be tempted to have a go but be warned – having protected your score through the woods, many a golfer has come unstuck and ruined their card.

Founded in 1913, Stocksfield Golf Club is celebrating its centenary year and a number of events and competitions are planned throughout 2013. And although the course is always beautifully presented, a credit to Course Manager Phil Armstrong and his greenkeeping staff, I have no doubt that they will go that extra mile and deliver something very special this year.

With an expanding membership, the old clubhouse proved to be inadequate and in 1984, a new modern one was built. The new building provided more space and up to date facilities but still retained a friendly atmosphere. Today visitors and members alike enjoy an excellent bar diner, restaurant area which can be separated from the bar, an excellent snooker table in the games room and upgraded locker facilities. The



Catering Manager is Russell Wilson who has been at the club for a number of years and offers a comprehensive and competitively priced menu available for both snacks and full meals – the Saturday and Sunday roast carveries are excellent.

And if your game needs a little attention, PGA Professional Steve Harrison provides not only a very good tuition service but a small well stocked Pro Shop with all the equipment which might help you reduce your handicap.

The course at Stocksfield might scare some of the 'Rabbits' in the region half to death but it has produced a number of very talented players. Under the guidance of the then professional Steve McKenna, three youngsters emerged. In 1994, Sam Oliver gained English schoolboy honours and from 1998, Andy Paisley and Chris McDonnell



dominated the Northumberland County scene both representing England at various levels – all three have now turned professional. But it's Andy's younger brother Chris who really put Stocksfield on the map. Arguably the club's most successful amateur, winning various county honours and representing GB & Ireland against the USA in the 2009 Walker Cup. Now on the European Tour, Chris has not had the best of starts missing five cuts in a row, but I'm sure he will adjust and it's only a matter of time before he brings back even greater honours to Stocksfield.

As for the course, the drive from the medal tee at the second is an extremely tough shot and players who find the fairway can breathe a sigh of relief. And the approach at the par four seventh to a plateau green with out of bounds at the rear can easily be a card-wrecker.

The signature 9th hole is followed by one of the best par threes in the north of England and if you are unlucky enough to be playing it into the prevailing westerly, be prepared to drop a shot or two.

At the uphill par four 10th hole you will need two accurate and long shots to reach the green and there is that dreaded green at the 15th – a couple of windmills or churches wouldn't be out of place – so don't concede any putts at this one not even gimmees.

The finishing hole is a nice little par three outside the clubhouse with no more than a nine iron or wedge needed for most, and a good birdie chance if you judge it right.

Following your round at Stocksfield, and once the weather warms up, the patio decking in front of the clubhouse is a superb location to relax over a pint or two and to contemplate how to tackle the course on your next visit.

FACT FILE

CONTACT

Stocksfield Golf Club, New Ridley Road, Stocksfield, Northumberland, NE43 7RE
 Email: info@sgcgolf.co.uk
 Web: www.stocksfieldgolfclub.co.uk

GREEN FEES

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CADDY'S TIP

A utility club or longish iron from many of the tees may be a more sensible option – finding the fairways is paramount.

SIGNATURE HOLE

For sheer scenic value it has to be the par five 9th hole. Played downhill from the highest point on the course, with trees lining both sides of the fairway, the drive is intimidating to say the least – two solid straight shots should get somewhere near and a chance of getting up and down for birdie.

«The club started life as a nine-hole course on land to the north of New Ridley Road with around 100 members and a small wooden clubhouse.

In 1949 the club moved across the road to a new nine-hole course and in 1975, more land was acquired and the intimidating front nine constructed using a revolutionary piece of machinery that cleared paths through the woods.



PAUL CORNEY'S VERDICT

The golf course at Stocksfield is a very good examination of a golfer's ability and tests your course management to the full. Once the greens are up to speed they can be the quickest in the North East, true and firm and a delight to putt on. A lovely setting and real treat to play.



San-sational

A golfing trip to Portugal's Algarve wouldn't be the same without a round at San Lorenzo

San Lorenzo is constantly at the top of the list of courses in Portugal's Algarve. Which serves to underline the popularity this prestigious and much-loved course attracts.

Hard to believe the course opened as long ago as 1988 and with the golf industry continuing to play such an important part in the region's economy – both directly and indirectly – it's hard to remember a time when neither the Algarve, nor golf, were readily accessible.

San Lorenzo is ever widely praised by golf professionals, journalists, a host of celebrities from the worlds of sport and entertainment, not to mention visiting amateurs.

A Joseph Lee design, San Lorenzo occupies what must still surely remain one of the most enviable locations in southern Iberia, bordering the ocean along the estuary of the environmentally protected Ria Formosa Nature Reserve, with its salt water marshes.

Away from the coastline, the course

features those indigenous - almost 'trademark' - pine trees which are so well-known and characteristic of this region.

Water plays a prominent part in the overall layout: holes 6 and 7 are right at the water's edge at the beach, while 8, 17 and 18 border an extensive, inland lagoon - both providing a protected home for an enormous variety of wild fowl and birds. Inland, the course wends its way through a series of exclusive residential properties.

It's not easy to decide which hole to designate as 'signature'. The par 4 sixth, at stroke index one, perhaps? A dog-leg left, which, from the inspiring, elevated tee begs you to go for it and try to cut the corner, looking for a possible birdie opportunity. Once having turned the corner, there's a view of the none-too-generous green, tucked in close to the water's edge, with the realisation that making par may not be as easy as one

might have first thought.

The hole, however, which features most prominently – let's say pictorially – must be the 18th. A par four, flanked to the left by a lake, the approach is across the water to a green which seems visibly to shrink as you consider the shot. In general terms, San Lorenzo should be regarded as a players' course with a sensible approach, rather than spectacular chances: the totally contrasting variety of holes makes it particularly attractive, continually presenting the player with different challenges.

Over the years, the course has consistently received acclaim after acclaim for high standards of upkeep and maintenance, not to mention its sheer beauty

The JJ Hotels Worldwide five-star Dona Filipa is just a 10 minutes ride away via the hotel's shuttle bus service and is the designate hotel for the golf course.

While the Dona Filipa is very

much golf-orientated, there are a whole range of other facilities on offer, as befits a hotel of this calibre. A state of the art Spa offers luxury pampering, while children are catered for at the Kangaroo Club.

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CELADNA-OSTRAVICE GOLF

The Celadna-Ostravice Golf Destination is described as the jewel in the crown of the Czech Republic's golf scene.

With three golf courses, three restaurants, two hotels, clubhouses, a spa, two academies, two pro shops and even a horse ranch, it certainly has everything going for it.

The three courses are the Old, the New and the Ostravice and the complex hosted the Czech Open on the European Tour for three successive years starting in 2009.

The Old Course, designed by Miguel Angel Jimenez, was used for the tour event but the New Course is also popular as the first nine holes are designed as a classic Scottish links while the second nine holes are closer to the Beskydy Mountains and considered more difficult, but with beautiful views of the countryside.

The Ostravice Course is described as a championship parkland course. Designed by Chris Johnson and constructed to USGA standards is said to be a balance between varied flora, Beskydian forest and "turf grass."

Nearly 7,000 yards in length with around 80 bunkers, the course is a challenge, but with five tees on every hole, it suits golfers of all abilities.

Czech out Harry's place

Harry Thomson has been plying his traded in Europe for more years than he cares to remember but he shows no signs of slowing down.

Arriving in Newcastle in 1978 to work at the John Jacobs Golf Centre – now Parklands – he took to the place so well he won the John Letters Target Golf Championship four years in a row.

Spells at Newcastle United and George Washington made him very much an adopted Geordie, but Europe beckoned thereafter and he left Tyneside for posts at Linz in Austria, two clubs in Oslo, the head professional's job at Royal Latem in Belgium and then as Director of Golf at the National Golf Club at Belek in Turkey.

Now he's based in Copenhagen at the Marielyst club as head professional, but he's also forged an interesting link with an exciting development Celadna-Ostravice Golf Destination in the burgeoning golf scene in the Czech Republic.

"The National was my first position as a Golf Director and when I went there nobody really thought about Turkey as a golf

destination," he said, "but I could see the potential and after a lot of hard work and drawing on my international experience we introduced new ideas.

"It has since become one of the most popular courses in Europe and anyone going to Belek always wants to play at the National. I was there for three years and it was very challenging but very exciting and I enjoyed it very much. I then moved on to Denmark and I've been very happy here at Marielyst."

Celadna-Ostravice Golf Destination sounded out Harry about moving to their operation but he decided against another move even though he was very impressed with the set up and the facilities at Celadna and agreed to be their Danish/Scandinavian representative responsible for arranging trips and now he's hoping to do the same here in the North-East along with Brian Mabbott and Northumbria Golf Breaks.

"It's quite an exciting concept," said Harry. "It has everything to offer golfers of all standards - a fantastic golf experience and I have no doubt the golfers from the North East would love it."

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Places to play with a luxury stay

Paul Corney checks out a hotel chain, which has become one of the most checked-in by golfers on a trip over the border

Many new business ventures carry initial risks, but for one entrepreneurial Scotsman, the company he founded over 50 years ago has flourished and is now one of the finest group of hotels in the UK offering a selection of superb golfing breaks along with many other activities.

Originally from Stranraer in south west Scotland, Hamilton (Hammy) McMillan returned from Canada in the early 1960s leaving behind a successful construction business to purchase North West Castle. The property, built by Arctic explorer Sir John Ross, was well known to Hammy and he was under no illusions that the building had great potential as a hotel.

After many months of hard work, the North West Castle Hotel opened for

business in 1962 with 12 bedrooms and was an immediate success. Hammy happened to be a keen curler and with the nearest curling rink located in Ayr some 50 miles away, in 1970 the hotel became the first hotel in the world to offer in indoor curling rink. Nowadays, North West Castle has 73 bedrooms and a leisure centre with swimming pool.

Following the success of his first development, in 1981 Hammy purchased Cally Palace in Gatehouse of Fleet. He restored the hotel and created an exclusive guest only 18-hole golf course in the magnificent grounds. An indoor swimming pool and a conservatory were subsequently added and over the years, Cally Palace has become a favourite destination for golfers who return year in year out to play the course.

In 1992, Kirroughtree House in

Newton Stewart was added to the family portfolio and following extensive refurbishment, the property was restored to its former glory and is justly proud of its 2 AA Rosettes award winning status. Now firmly established as one of Scotland's leading hotel chains, McMillan Hotels purchased Glenapp Castle in 1994, the Fernhill Hotel in Portpatrick in 1998, before expanding into the Scottish Borders, adding Peebles Hydro and its sister hotel the Park Hotel to its impressive list of award winning destinations.

The Galloway hotels offer a number of golfing packages giving golfers the opportunity to play at courses such as Stranraer, Portpatrick, Newton Stewart, Wigtown County and the exclusive Cally Palace course. In the Borders, you can choose between courses located at Peebles, West Linton, Torwoodlea

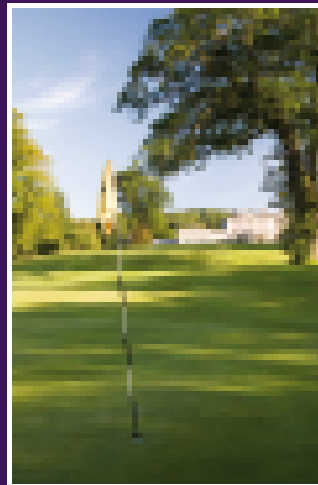
and the Dave Thomas designed championship course at Cardrona.

Besides golf, the south of Scotland is an ideal base for all sorts of outside activities making the most of the beautiful Scottish countryside be it mountain biking, fishing, walking, curling and many other breaks which are suitable for young and old alike. The philosophy of the McMillan family has always been to offer guests of all ages a warm welcome, value for money, and quality of service.

The group's rich history is just one of the elements that make McMillan Hotels so special – each with its own unique facilities and services which all combine to ensure that they are the most family-friendly in Scotland.

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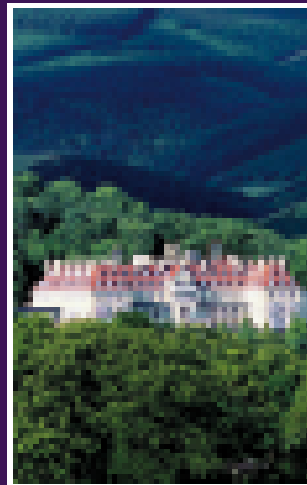
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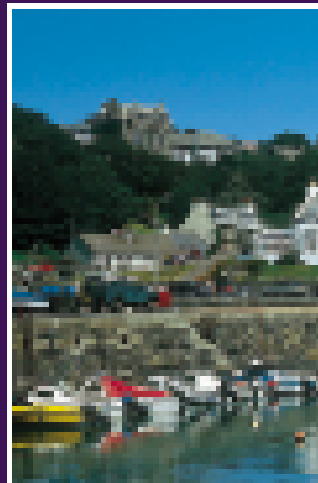
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Prices shown are per night, per person, based on a double room. Prices include a standard golf per night subject to availability. Golf packages are available on a first-come, first-served basis.

win

Northern Golfer competitions are also listed on our website at

www.northerngolfer.co.uk, alternatively you can enter via email: competitions@northerngolfer.co.uk (mark the competition name in the subject field) or post your entry to **Competitions, Northern Golfer, Unit One, Bearl Farm, Stocksfield, Northumberland, NE43 7AJ**

Please include your contact details and telephone number
Closing date Sunday, March 31, 2013.

Usual competition rules apply – available on request
Winners will be published in our next edition



WIN GOLF FOR FOUR AT BELLINGHAM GOLF CLUB

This highly regarded 18 hole par 70 golf course, is situated in the picturesque North Tyne Valley between Hadrian's Wall and the Scottish Border. It overlooks the village and has stunning views that extend up the valley towards Kielder Water and the Border Forest Park. Founded in 1893, the course was extended to 18 holes in 1996, the new nine holes designed by Ian Wilson, the secretary at the time. Casual visitors and golf parties are always welcome and a warm reception awaits in the clubhouse where you can relax and enjoy a good hearty meal or drink while taking in the views.

For your chance to win, simply answer the following question:

Who designed the new nine holes at Bellingham Golf Club?



WIN GOLF FOR FOUR AT ROSEBERRY GRANGE COMMUNITY GOLF CLUB

Including coffee and bacon rolls

Roseberry Grange Golf Club was originally run and maintained by Durham Council until a takeover by the members in July 2011, when it became known as Roseberry Grange Community Golf Club. It measures 6152 yards off the medal tees, (par 71), and 5672 yards off the yellows, (par 70). The course has a challenging layout offering a good variety of holes and a good test of golf for both the beginner and the more advanced player with some tricky shots into elevated greens. You can have a warm up on the driving range before going out to play and enjoy a home cooked meal and drink afterwards in the clubhouse where you can be sure of a friendly welcome.

For your chance to win, simply answer the following question:

Who originally ran Roseberry Grange Golf Club?



This 18 hole parkland course was designed by G Snowball and opened in 1973. The layout is ideal for golfers wishing to play nine, 18, 27 or 36 holes and is a good test for golfers of all standards. It is an easy walking course set in a very picturesque setting with excellent practice facilities, a driving range and comfortable clubhouse with full catering facilities, live sport is shown on a regular basis. Visitors and golf parties are always welcome.

For your chance to win, simply answer the following question:

What type of course is Centurion Park?



WIN GOLF FOR FOUR AT COOKRIDGE HALL

This 18 hole par 72 Championship course offers a great test of golf with spectacular views across the Yorkshire Dales. Cookridge Hall continues to pave the way in setting the standards for golf in Leeds, Yorkshire and beyond. With a 22-bay floodlit driving range and an 18th Century clubhouse you will find exceptional service and unrivalled hospitality. Visitors are always offered a very warm welcome at Cookridge Hall.

For your chance to win, simply answer the following question:

What century is Cookridge Hall's clubhouse?

THE WEATHER MIGHT NOT HAVE BEEN IDEAL IN DECEMBER AND JANUARY BUT THAT DIDN'T STOP AVID READERS OF NORTH EAST/ NORTHERN GOLFER PICKING UP A COPY AND ENTERING OUR COMPETITIONS, WE RECEIVED OVER 500 ENTRIES. THE WINNERS ARE:

Golf for 4 at Whitburn: Craig Williams of Sacriston **Druh Bracelet:** J Murdoch of Belford, Diane Harvey of Edmundbyers **Skin Your Clubs:** Thomas Lawson of Spennymoor, Mark Lendrum of Blaydon, Richard Mawson of Bishop Auckland, John Mather of Ashington, Margaret Tindale of Edmonsley, Thomas Docherty of Peterlee, Ken Quinn of Guisborough, Adam Pilkington of Seaton Delaval, David McNeill of Bellingham and Janet Barclay of Whickham

Improve golf with the Italian Job

A new coaching programme in North East Italy is proving popular. Paul Corney reports

Winter is the best time for golfers to practice and there has never been a better opportunity to learn the game than through a new intensive coaching programme developed by Grado Golf Club in north east Italy.

Beginners can visit the stunning resort, in the region of Venice, to take part in a specialist programme delivered by Grado's team of leading teaching professionals. The package of ten lessons can be taken over two to five days and covers the basics of the game from grip, alignment and posture to building a swing. The coaches will take clients through the various shots required to play including drives, iron shots, chips, bunker play and putting.

At the end of the course, which can be tailored to the specific requirements of the individual golfer, clients will receive a certificate or a platzreife for German golfers, which demonstrates that they are capable of playing on a golf course. The package price starts at £330.

For experienced golfers Grado is offering special two night packages over the winter months with golf on the scenic championship course at Grado and accommodation in the Marina Suites. The package price starts at £150 for a double room and includes breakfast, two green fees, two driving range tokens and a trolley rental.

Grado has also formed a new partnership with the luxurious 4*



Grado Golf Club in north east Italy

Laguna Palace Hotel overlooking the Laguna di Grado. With a TripAdvisor rating of 97% the hotel is one of the finest in the area.

Grado's challenging 6650 yard championship golf course meanders past the Laguna and the Adriatic Sea.

The signature par three opening hole plays to an island green which has led to media commentators describing the course as "the European Sawgrass". The winter weekday green fee offers excellent value at 45€. The happy Friday green fee for two players is 79€ or 119€ for three or four players. Please note that the course will be closed on Mondays and Tuesdays until March.





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CURE YOUR SLICE AND HIT MORE FAIRWAYS

Alignment is part of your routine that deserves respect and attention.

Poor alignment will always lead to poor swing executions, poor results and loss of distance. By improving your alignment you will open yourself up to realising more of your potential.

1 POSITION

A common fault with club golfers is that of the advancing ball position. The more the ball creeps forward in the stance the golfer squares up and faces the ball, here illustrated with my driver this “swivels” the upper body over to the left side opening up the upper body alignment left of target. This configuration will make consistent ball flight a struggle.



2 CORRECTION

The only choice the player now has is that he/she must try to correct this alignment error during the swing. The weight fights to even out, moving towards the back foot and the clubface is left open to try and avoid the pull left.



3 ADDRESS

Here my address position illustrates a more neutral set up with my upper body more aligned with my lower body this puts my head and torso more central and to the right of the advanced ball position, weight more balanced across both feet.

CONCLUSION

Being prepared for the new season ahead will enable you to focus on enjoying your game and achieving more on the course. Your coach will be able to spot flaws and faults before they happen. Make it your New Year's resolution to get an MOT and service before season really gets underway.

» Mark Stancer is a senior PGA golf instructor at Parklands Golf Centre, High Gosforth Park, Gosforth, Newcastle. To make an appointment with Mark, tel 0191 236 4480



4 BENEFITS

Developing good alignment in your preparation has numerous knock on benefits, greater opportunity for the swing path to flow better around your body allowing you to be more confident in delivering a powerful blow towards the correct target.

Graeme Storm
January 2013



THE SEASON STARTS

Life of a tour professional with Rockliffe Hall's Graeme Storm



My 2013 season started before Christmas in South Africa, playing two events. They didn't quite go to plan regarding my results but I got to take a lot of positives from the trip.

Having taking time off, the clubs came back out on January 2 and I got to work on the departments of my game in preparation for my two events in the Middle East.

Getting to play in such big events at the start of the year is a great boost for a European tour pro. The HSBC in Abu Dhabi fits that bill, competing against the best players on the planet, such as Rory McIlroy and Tiger Woods.

I decided to go to Abu Dhabi early to get some warm weather practice. It's really important to get myself acclimatised to the heat- especially coming from the cold North East.

It's also a chance to take maximum advantage of the great facilities provided for us and I got the chance to test the new Taylor Made equipment, especially the new R1 Driver which is the best driver I've managed to hit for a long time.

The two weeks again didn't really work out how I would have liked on the course, making one cut from the two, but I feel I played some really good golf, just a little sloppy at times. My attitude was great and my ball striking improved as each day passed, I just didn't quite get the rub of the green or hole my fair share of putts.

If I continue to play the way I have and keep improving in the areas I feel I need to, then my results will start improving consistently and, who knows, maybe a win could be round the corner

Getting to watch guys like Tiger, Rory and my old pal Justin Rose, who I go a long way back to our boys' and men's amateur days, makes you want to work harder.

It's always great to catch up with Justin and talk about how our families are doing, as we have children of a similar age, and find out what makes him tick to improve to be the player he has become, because as we all know he had it tough at the beginning, too.

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01765 688054

Oakdale Golf Club

Oakdale, Harrogate,
HG1 2LN
01423 567162

Pannal Golf Club

Follifoot Road, Pannal,
HG3 1ES
01423 872628

Pike Hills Golf Club

Tadcaster Road,
Askham Bryan,
YO23 3UW
01904 700797

Richmond Golf Club

Bend Hagg, Richmond
DL10 5EX
01748 823 231
secretary@richmondryorkgolfclub.co.uk
www.richmondryorkgolfclub.co.uk

Ripon Golf Club

Palace Road, Ripon,
HG4 3HH
01765 603640

Romanby Golf Club

Yafforth Road,
Northallerton
DL7 0PE
01609 778 855

Rudding Park Golf Club

Rudding Park, Harrogate,
HG3 1JH
01423 872100
www.ruddingpark.com

Sandburn Hall Golf Club

Flaxton, York, YO60 7RB
01904 469929
www.sandburnhall.co.uk

Scalm Park Golf Club

Bishop Wood,
Wistow Common,
Selby,
YO8 3RD
01757 210846

Scarborough North Cliff Golf Club

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Scarborough,
YO12 6PP
01723 355397

Scarborough South Cliff Golf Club

Deepdale Avenue, off Filey Road,
YO11 2UE
01723 360522

Scarthingwell Golf Club

The Scarthingwell Centre,
Scarthingwell, Tadcaster,
LS24 9PF
01937 557878

Selby Golf Club

Mill Lane, Brayton,
YO8 9LD
01757 228622

Settle Golf Club

Giggleswick, Settle,
BD24 0DH
01729 825288

Skipton Golf Club

Short Lee Lane, Skipton,
BD23 3LF
01756 795657

The Oaks Golf Club

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Aughton,
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01757 288577

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Thirsk, YO7 4AB
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Wensleydale,
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01677 450201

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Whitby,
YO21 3SR
01947 600660

York Golf Club

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Strensall,
YO32 5XF
01904 491840

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0113 2681680

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0113 2300641
www.cookridgehall.co.uk

Garforth Golf Club

Long Lane, Garforth,
Leeds,
LS25 2DS
0113 2862021

Headingley Golf Club

Back Church Lane,
Adel, Leeds,
LS16 8DW
0113 2679573

Leeds Golf Club

Elmete Lane, Leeds,
LS8 2LJ
0113 2659203

Leeds Golf Centre

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LS17 9JW
0113 2886000

Moor Allerton Golf Club

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0113 2685180

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LS14 3BQ
0113 2892263

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LS22 4JF
01937 580089

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01642 300720

Andy Paisley Golf Centre,

Hexham Golf Club,
Spittal Lane,
Hexham, NE46 3RZ
01434 603072

Aslan Golf

Oakleaf Golf Complex,
School Aycliffe Lane,
Newton Aycliffe,
DL5 4EF
01325 310820

Direct Golf

Lullingstone Crescent
Stockton-on-Tees, Cleveland
TS17 5GJ
01642 765000

Eureka

Copt Hill, Houghton le Spring,
DH5 8LU
0191 5841198

Custom Fit Golf

South Moor Golf Club Superstore
Craghead, Stanley
DH9 6AG
01207 283 525

Leda Discount Golf Centre

Grange Villa, Chester le Street
DH2 3NF
0191 3701757

Mark Rayson Golf

Hobson Golf Club, Burnopfield,
NE16 6BZ
01207 271605
mark@markraysongolf.com
www.markraysongolf.com

Mickley Driving Range

Mickley, Stocksfield NE43 7LR

Philips Golf Discount

Unit 3 Strand Business Centre
Locomotion Way, Camperdown Ind Est
Killingworth, NE12 5UJ
0191 268 0008

Snainton Golf Direct

Coast View, Swarland, Felton,
NE65 9JG
01670 787 010

Stokesley Driving Range

Broughton Road, Stokesley
TS9 5JJ

The Golf Bunker

Royal Quays Outlet, North Shields,
NE29 6DW
0191 2581598

The Hobson Golf Range

Hobson Golf Club, Burnopfield,
NE16 6BZ
www.hobsongolfrange.co.uk

Tim Jenkins Golf

Cleveland Golf Club
Majuba Road, Redcar, TS10 5BJ
01642 471 798

ZFL Golf

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Industrial Estate, NE12 9SZ
0191 2702362

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All these listings are available on our **Norther Golfer website directory**

ALNWICK CASTLE

Winter League Week 8 (9/12/12)

- 1 I. Watson 36 pts (CB)
- 2 A. Black 36 (CB)
- 3 M. Friar 36

Christmas Texas Scramble (30/12/12)

- 1 K. Darlow, R. Shepherd & J. Pentleton 61.2 Nett
- 2 B. Eastham, S. Cooper & P. Lewis 62.3 (CB)
- 3 D. Harrison, M. Smith & A. Dodd 62.3

Winter League Week 11 (6/1/13)

- 1 I. Hogg 50 pts
- 2 P. Ginger 40 (CB)
- 3 M. Friar 40

Winter League Week 12 (13/1/13)

- 1 W. Belisle 36 pts (CB)
- 2 M. Bedford 36
- 3 E. Jury 35

BEDALE

Ladies Stableford (24/11/12)

- 1 J. Sanderson 31 pts
- 2 J. Geldart 27 (CB)
- 3 M. Dawson 27

Thursday Stableford (29/11/12)

- 1 G. Davies 40 pts
- 2 J. Norwood 39 pts
- 3 G. Sinclair 37

Seniors 3-clubs + putter (30/11/12)

- 1 N. Exelby 33 pts (CB)
- 2 L. Morely 33
- 3 D. Wilkinson 31

Stableford Comp (2/12/12)

- 1 S. Robinson 37 pts
- 2 M. Kilbride 33
- 3 N. Exelby 32 (CB)

Ladies Stableford (5/12/12)

- 1 B. Channon 38 pts
- 2 M. Tuer 36
- 3 J. Court 35

Thursday Stableford (6/12/12)

- 1 G. Boothroyd 39 pts (CB)
- 2 E. Adair 39
- 3 N. Winstanley 38

Seniors Average Stableford

- 1 D. Wilkinson, I. Robinson & S. Channon 37.33 pts
- 2 L. Morely & D. Parkinson 36

Winter League Am Am (9/12/12)

- 1 C. Smith, I. Smith, K. Rayner & B. Barclay 93 pts
- 2 M. Allison, H. Sargent, R. Meggon & G. Coles 92
- 3 P. Astwood, S. Metcalf, D. Snaith & A. Whelan 89

Thursday Stableford (13/12/12)

- 1 J. Condon 35 pts
- 2 J. Shaw 33
- 3 G. Robinson 32

Seasonal Final Standings

- 1 D. Blades 389
- 2 J. Norwood 387
- 3 N. Winstanley 384

Ladies Stableford (19/12/12)

- 1 T. Williamson 39 pts
- 2 D. Hill 37
- 3 J. Noble 34

CATTERICK

January Medal (6/1/13)

- Division 1**
- 1 J. Sanjali 66 Nett
 - 2 G. Harris 69
 - 3 R. Malla 70
- Division 2**
- 1 P. Limbu 64 Nett
 - 2 P. Finn 68
 - 3 K. Yoemans 69
- Division 3**
- 1 I. Mack 69 Nett
 - 2 A. Shepherd 71
 - 3 M. Rai 72

EAGLESCLIFFE

Winter 4BBB Medal (15/12/12)

- 1 S. Smith & H. Killick .. 60 Nett (CB)
- 2 M. Wensley & J. King 60
- 3 A. Watson & M. Eddy 61

Winter 4BBB (5/1/13)

- 1 G. Steel & B. Littler 62 Nett
- 2 R. Hutton & T. Hutton 63
- 3 C. Richardson & P. Copley 64

Winter 4BBB (12/1/13)

- 1 G. Millward & R. Jackson +9
- 2 R. Todd & D. Jeffcock +8 (CB)
- 3 S. Anderson & D. Walker +8

NORTHUMBERLAND & DURHAM GOLF ALLIANCE

Kerwood Cup held at Alnmouth GC (9/1/13)

- 1 M. Young & J. Moore 48 pts (Bedlingtonshire GC)
- 2 S. Hopper & C. Webster 44 (CB) (Durham GC)
- 3 M. Nesbitt & N. Clarke 44 (Westerhope GC)

Pro Am

- 1 M. Nesbitt & N. Clarke 44 pts (Westerhope GC)
- G. Cowan & R. Temple 44 (Westerhope GC)
- 3 M. Forster & J. Hendrick 40 (Tynedale GC)

Uniroyal Quaich Competition at Hartlepool GC (30/1/13)

- 1 T. Bainbridge & M. Lyons 42 pts (CB) (Brancepeth Castle GC)
- 2 G. Maddison & J. Clark 42 (Durham & Consett Gcs)
- 3 E. Wilson & J. Moore 41 (Woodham & Bedlington)

Pro Am

- 1 E. Wilson & J. Moore 41 pts (Woodham & Bedlington)
- 2 M. Nesbitt & M. Povey 36 (Westerhope)

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from the bunker

Welcome to the reader feedback page where you can tell us your likes, dislikes and funny golfing stories as well make suggestions at to what you would like to see in your Northern Golfer

Send your Feedback to editor@notherngolfer.co.uk or via Twitter @negolfer Please include contact details and photos



Next issue available in all good golf clubs from Thursday 11th April 2013

NG: We start this month's bunker with a letter from John Perry, chairman of Prudhoe Golf Club. He wrote:

I read with interest the article about Tynemouth GC introducing a new Flexible Payment Scheme and the success they were having.

We introduced a Play as you Play scheme some three years ago to try and retain / capture those golfers who do not play frequently enough to warrant paying a full fee.

Our P&P membership fee is now £172. We started at £150 and currently pay £10 a game at the weekend and £7 during the week.

They enjoy all the same benefits as full members. Such as:

- They can enter all competitions at the weekend or during the week and can book tee-times on the same basis as full members
- They also qualify for the same bar discounts as full members.
- Retain a handicap
- Use all the club facilities - access to locker's etc



Prudhoe Golf Club

I wish Tynemouth the best of luck with their scheme

I enjoy reading the magazine and good luck for 2013.

NG: Thanks John and thanks also to John Greatbatch, chair of marketing and new membership at Whickham who said:

Last edition was a tribute which demonstrated the strides you've made since taking the northern golfing scene by storm! Well done to you and the team for putting pride back into our regional sport. Your success proves we have an appetite we have for quality coverage.

NG: Meanwhile, Fred Kirkland, Golf coach (L3) has asked us to highlight the excellent service he has had at Ryton Golf Club.

We (a group of four) have played at Ryton several times this year taking advantage of your generous and welcome discounts. Your innovative

approach in attracting patrons is refreshing and worth a comment - please make Northern Golfer magazine aware of your inspired approach in these difficult times and perhaps they may print this letter as endorsement of your marketing initiatives (as you see we have). Fear not - others will not follow, as many clubs are closed minded to such methods and happy to put up fees as a way of compensating for a lack of ideas on how to attract new members.

Please pass on a special mention of thanks to the bar and food staff who do an excellent job and to all the members who treat us visitors with courtesy and respect at all times.

NG: And finally a joke

Two men playing golf. One is about to chip onto the green when he sees a funeral pass the course. He stops mid swing, takes off his cap and makes the sign of the cross. His friend says, "Wow that is the most thoughtful, touching thing I have ever seen". His mate replies, "Well, we were married 35 years."

NG: In the interest of health and safety (his own) the male sender has asked to remain anonymous!

Email your feedback to editor@notherngolfer.co.uk

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