



LINKS NEWS

The Newsletter of St Andrews Links

New chairmen of Trustees and Links Management Committee



● Peter Forster

New chairmen have been appointed to the board of Trustees at St Andrews Links and the Links Management Committee.

Peter Forster succeeds Alastair Dempster after his three years as chairman of Trustees and Dr John Mills takes over from Jim White, whose six-year term as chairman came to an end in December.

Mr Forster has served as a Trustee for five years. He has been a member of the Royal and Ancient Golf Club for 37 years and is a past chairman of the Club Committee. He has had a lifelong connection with St Andrews. He is also a member of Scotsraig Golf Club and farms at Peacehill near Wormit.



● John Mills

The Trustees are responsible for ensuring that the Trust is run in accordance with the aims and purposes of the Act of Parliament by which it was formed.

Mr Forster said, 'I am pleased and honoured to be elected chairman and look forward to working with my fellow Trustees to ensure that local golfers and visitors enjoy a golfing experience that meets with their expectations.'

'It is undoubtedly a challenging time given the economic climate but it is also exciting with The Castle Course about to have its first full season and the return of The Open Championship to the Old Course next year.'

Dr Mills has served on the LMC, which is responsible for overseeing the day to

day running of the seven public courses in the town, for three years. He was born in Dundee and is a graduate of the University of St Andrews. A retired gynaecologist who has lived in St Andrews for 25 years, Dr Mills started playing golf as a student and joined the New Golf Club of St Andrews more than 30 years ago. He has served on the R&A's Club Committee and was their Chief Marshal. He is married with three grown-up children.

Dr Mills said, 'The LMC has an important role to play in ensuring the highest standards are maintained on the courses. The Links is central not only to golf in St Andrews but in Scotland as a whole.'

Stephen Sweeney joins the Academy

Stephen joins St Andrews Links Golf Academy from The Montgomerie in Dubai where he was a senior instructor at The Academy by Troon Golf, and responsible for its Junior Development Programme. Under Stephen's direction, the junior programme was recognised as one of the strongest in the Gulf Region with nearly 150 junior golfers in attendance on a weekly basis.

A native of County Donegal in Ireland, Stephen's spent four years as an apprentice at Royal Country Down. He turned professional at the age of 18 and competed on the Irish

Circuit for three seasons before leaving the UK to gain international experience at Sawgrass Country Club in Florida. While in the US, Stephen shadow coached at the Butch Harmon Golf School in Las Vegas and observed the delivery of instruction to amateurs as well as upcoming PGA touring professional Charley Hoffman and veteran Craig Stadler.

Stephen joined the staff at The Montgomerie in Dubai in 2007. In addition to leading its successful junior programme, he was instrumental in the set-up and delivery of

corporate events and established an impressive individual client base of amateur and professional golfers. During his time in the Middle East, Stephen was a regular competitor on the UAE PGA Circuit. He was also a regular contributor of instructional articles to the UAE's Worldwide Golf Magazine.

Stephen's coaching philosophy is to identify realistic goals while maximising a student's potential, and he believes that clear communication and mutual understanding forms the foundation of a trusting relationship and consistent game improvement.



Course UPDATE

Old Course

Attention to presentation is uppermost in our thoughts as we near the start of the main playing season. All greens have been sprayed with sulphate of iron to harden turf against disease and suppress winter moss ingress. All spring aeration has been completed and regular top dressing will be taking place to help firm and true surfaces. Sand has been added to all bunkers. Watering of all areas will take place to prevent any drying out of surfaces too early in season. Spring fertiliser will be applied to greens in mid April.

New Course

All bunkers have been topped up, shaped and are ready for the new season. The dune on the left side of the fourteenth fairway is being planted with marram grass to recreate its original grassland appearance. Aprons are being aerated and overseeded with fescue to further improve grass cover and offer golfers the option of putting from off the green. Summer cutting and maintenance programmes are being implemented as growth dictates. Greens will be top dressed and hydroprojected regularly on Tuesdays, our maintenance mornings.

Jubilee Course

The main job for the next few weeks is to construct a reed bed wash-down system for Jubilee machinery. We also will be carrying out scarification work to the right hand side of the tenth hole, to help the sward become more wispy. Wetting agent will be applied to greens and surrounds and, depending on weather, we may put down our Spring starter fertiliser mid April. All newly revetted bunkers will gradually be brought back into play before the start of April. General course maintenance will also intensify as we get into the playing season.

Eden Course

Work through to mid April will focus on prepping the course for the coming season. All bunkers will be shaped, topped with sand where required and brought back into play for the end of the March. Some aftercare on the newly turfed areas and bunker tops will be carried out to strengthen them up. A spring feed will be applied and some areas will be top dressed. One area that this will concentrate on will be the reconstructed approach to the sixteenth hole. We will begin our top dressing programme on tees, greens and aprons. An application of seaweed will be applied to greens at the beginning of April to gently encourage some growth.

Strathyrum Course

An iron based fertiliser has been applied to greens and tees to provide a light feed and also to suppress moss and weeds. Following a rest period after renovation work, the main greens at ten and thirteen are back in play. Grassland management has been completed for the season. Tractor aeration work to fairways and walkways is currently underway and the irrigation system is being checked for the coming season. Greens will receive a light top dressing as soon as there is sufficient growth.

Golf Practice Centre

Practice greens and tees have received an application of iron based fertiliser and bunker repairs have been carried out at the short game area. The small pot bunker will be out of play for a while until new turf has established.

Pro tips from the Academy:

Literacy on the Greens, with Stephen Sweeney

Every golfer knows that the key to a successful round of golf lies in the short game; more specifically, putting. At St Andrews Links or The Castle Course, greens can be as challenging as anywhere you might mention. Not only are they sometimes quite large but they are also very undulating, leaving the golfer facing long putts with lots of break. To combat this, it is imperative that you begin to **look at the putting surface before stepping onto the green**. Much can be gained by looking at the green as you approach it. Does it slope from right to left, or back to front or even towards the sea?



Upon reaching the ball, the next thing is to **judge the speed of the putt**. This will of course be determined by whether the putt is uphill or downhill. To get a good idea of this, you should view the putt from a side-on position half way between the ball and the hole. Once you have viewed the putt from this angle, you will have gained a greater sense of how hard the putt needs to be struck in order to reach the hole.



The next task is to **look carefully at the area around the hole**. As the ball nears the hole, it will be moving slower than at the start of the putt and any slope around the hole will have a greater effect on movement of the ball. By studying the break of the ball close to the hole, you will get a better understanding of the overall break of the putt.



Now we reach the final part of the sequence, reading the break of the putt from behind the ball, towards the hole. Here you must look at the overall topography of the green and decide if the putt will break left to right or right to left. On some putts it may even do both, therefore **choosing an apex or breaking point is vital**. The apex depends on what speed you have decided to hit the putt and how much you feel the ball will break at that speed.



The result should be fewer three putts and even holing the occasional long putt as well.

To book a lesson at the Academy call 01334 466606, email academy@pgam.com, or visit www.pgam.com



New executive chef on the menu

St Andrews Links has appointed Ian MacDonald as its new executive chef. He takes on responsibility for all restaurants in the three public clubhouses at the Home of Golf.

Welcoming Ian to the Links, Ewen Bowman, director of operations said; 'Ian is one of the best known figures in the Scottish culinary profession. He has been on the board of the Federation of Chefs Scotland for eight years and has an outstanding track record in training chefs and developing their skills through competition.'

'This is an exciting time to be joining the Links Trust,' said Ian. 'The clubhouses operate to a very high standard. I am lucky with what I have inherited here. The team is well motivated and enthusiastic.'

St Andrews Links Clubhouse has just undergone a major refurbishment, transforming two restaurants into a single space seating up to 170 people, while the circular Castle Course Clubhouse is one of the most striking in golf and will start its first full season of operation on 1 April. The Eden Clubhouse remains a popular attraction for local golfers and visitors alike.

'I will take a few months to find my way around and assess what the customers want from each of our facilities; it is important to build up a rapport with them.'

'I would like to source food as locally as possible. Provenance is very important today; customers want to know where the food has come from and even how it got here. My ideal would be to have our producers on our own doorstep and Scotland is further ahead in this than England. We are all learning how to appreciate food.'

Ian keeps a keen eye on developments in the industry; 'There is a definite switch back to more traditional cooking methods, For example, more chefs are choosing slow cooking to enhance the flavour of meats.'

Ian will encourage his staff to deepen their knowledge.

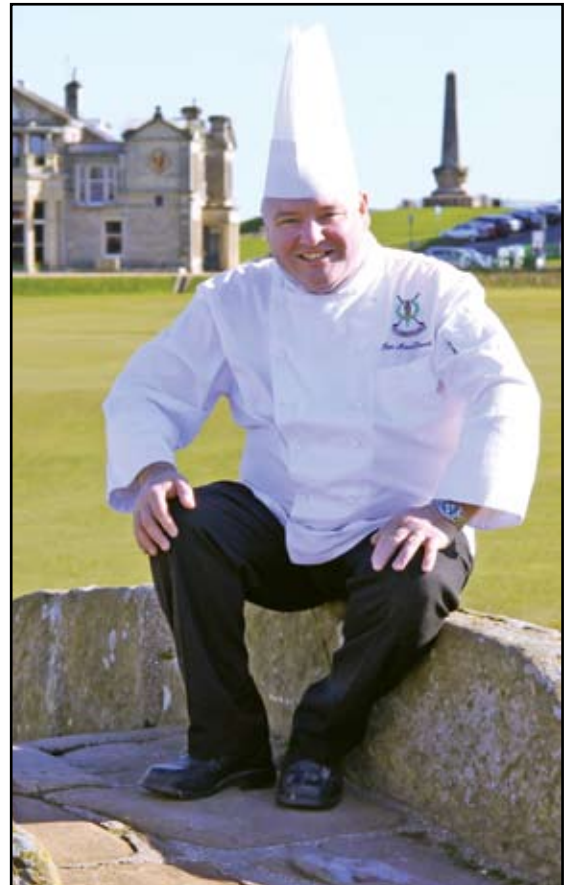
'Training is very big with me. I teach one morning a week in Perth and I hope to continue my work with Fife Council and local schools in educating young people on how to choose and prepare food.'

Ian comes from a farming background and learned to cook at an early age.

'My mother was always cooking and baking while my father would often come home with fresh local produce, including all sorts of game. I have always had a love for cooking.'

Ian's first job was at the Station Hotel in his home town of Inverness. After a spell in Dunkeld he spent many years managing the kitchens at Balbirnie House Hotel, before moving on to a position as Food Sales Manager for Braehead Foods covering an area extending from Aviemore to the Lake District. Ian's most recent post was as Food Development Manager with Gastro Taverns.

A winner of eight gold medals at national and international level, Ian is co-manager of the Scottish Culinary Olympics team which recently competed in Germany together with 1600 chefs from more than 50



● Ian MacDonald

countries. The junior squad is ranked in the world's top 10.

'Competitions help to raise the standards of culinary excellence and professionalism, promote camaraderie and provide educational opportunities. They also allow the public to observe developments in the trade. By promoting a greater understanding of sound culinary philosophies, food shows provide an excellent forum for the public's education.'

Ian is 48-years-old and lives in Fife. He is married with four children and has just welcomed a third grandchild. A keen golfer, he organises the Federation of Chefs Scotland golfing days and currently plays to a handicap of 16.



The Castle Course set for first full season



● Work on preparing The Castle Course for its first full season has been continuing throughout the winter months.

The Castle Course, the seventh course at the Home of Golf, has its first full season in 2009 starting on 1 April and running until 1 November.

Designed by leading Scottish architect David McLay Kidd, The Castle Course was officially opened by the Duke of York in July last year and has already garnered several leading industry awards, including New Course of the Year from Travel + Leisure Golf and International Development of the Year from Golf Inc.

‘We were very happy with the way The Castle Course performed in its first four-month season in 2008, when 14,000 rounds were played,’ said Alan McGregor, chief executive of St Andrews Links.

‘There was a great deal of feedback from golfers and we have studied closely the responses we had. In partnership with the architect and the Links Management Committee, we have made a few modifications to the course over the winter months and these alterations should ensure that golfers have an even more enjoyable experience.’

Most of the work has been carried out on the fifteenth hole. Mounds obscuring the bunker complex in play from the tee have been removed and the bunker has been realigned so that it is clearer there are two levels to the fairway.

The burn in front of the green has been rerouted, creating more area for an approach shot to land in and the area behind the green has been built up and reshaped.

Other mounds, or spill-offs, have been removed or modified. On the fourth hole, a mound to the right of the green has been removed. Individual spill offs in the middle of the fifth and sixth fairways have gone, and two of the four mounds on the ninth fairway have also been taken away. The area to the right side of the tenth green has been similarly modified. A mound on the fourteenth has been cleared away, effectively bringing the fairway closer to the tee and opening up the view. One spill-off in the landing zone on eighteen has been cleared while a second one has been lowered.

Additional improvements to the drainage system have been made and sections of the roadways have been tarred to prevent the grey dust which coats them from being washed onto fairways during periods of very heavy rain.



Elusive birdies sought for the finest address in golf

One of Scotland's most elusive and beautiful birds is being encouraged to take up residence at the Home of Golf.

St Andrews Links Trust has sponsored the building and installation of a barn owl nesting box which has been sited close to the Strathtyrum Course.

'Many of the barn owl's natural habitat areas have been destroyed over recent decades and concerted action is needed to preserve this bird for the future,' said Gordon Moir, director of greenkeeping.

The open grassland habitat of the Links is well suited to barn owls, which prey on small rodents such as shrews, voles and mice.

Nesting boxes are built in areas where barn owls have been sighted and it is hoped a pair will take up occupancy of their new address soon.

'Barn owls mate for life and stay in the same area once they are settled, so if we can attract a breeding pair we can enjoy the sight and sound of these magical birds for many years to come,' said Gordon.

The box was installed by Ranald Strachan and Bob Westin of the Fife Ranger Service.

'There are only around 800 barn owls in Scotland, and although the population is stable the bird is considered scarce,' said Ranald.

Constructed according to guidelines from the Barn Owl Trust, the nesting box is made from outdoor plywood and roofing felt and is designed to last for at least twenty years. It was built at Stratheden Hospital by members of a vocational training initiative run by FACET, Fife Arts and Crafts Enterprise Training, which provides workshops for people with disability or illness.

'The workshop specialises in environmental products, including bird box kits which are assembled by children as a contribution towards achieving Green Flag status for their school' said Niall Barnett, an instructor with Fife Council.

Barn owls have a distinctive heart shaped white face, white front and a pale brown back.



● Ranald Strachan (left) and Niall Barnett.

PLAYING THE LINKS

Starting times on all six 18 hole courses may be booked in advance but not for Saturday play, except on The Castle Course (subject to availability). Applications may be made by letter, phone, fax or email. The Reservations Office is open Monday-Friday 9am-5pm with the exception of Thursdays, when it opens at 9.30am. A minimum of two golfers should apply and pre-paid green fees are non-refundable.

Tee times can also be reserved through LinksNet, the Links Trust's online booking service. Visit www.standrews.org.uk for details.

Old Course (6721 yards, par 72)

First played on around 1400 and naturally formed, the Old Course regularly hosts The Open Championship. Like all the Links courses it is public. It is open Monday-Saturday all year and the playing interval is ten minutes. The handicap limit is 24 for men and 36 for ladies and a valid certificate has to be shown to the starter. Please check in with the starter at least 20 minutes before your tee time. Visiting golfers wishing to park at the Links Clubhouse should allow 25 minutes before their tee time and take the free shuttle buggy to the starter's box beside the first tee. Single players can join in a two or three ball by approaching the starter in the first instance.

Advance reservations

Applications will be taken on or after the first Wednesday in September for the following year. Please apply to reservations@standrews.org.uk.

Ballot

Every day except Sunday a ballot or draw takes place for a number of times on the following day on the Old Course. The Saturday draw is for play on Monday. You can enter by phone (01334 466666) or in person the morning before you wish to play and the ballot is drawn after 2pm. The results are announced on www.standrews.org.uk

The Castle Course (6759 yards, par 71)

The seventh course at the Home of Golf. Spectacular views from a cliff top site. Online bookings through www.standrews.org.uk

New Course (6625 yards, par 71)

Laid out by Old Tom Morris, this course was paid for by the Royal & Ancient Golf Club and opened in 1895. It is open every day, there is no handicap limit, and the playing interval is eight minutes. The order of play is determined by arrival on the first tee. Locals have priority between 5pm and 6pm. Online bookings through www.standrews.org.uk

Jubilee Course (6742 yards, par 72)

Opened as a 12 hole course in 1897, the Jubilee was extended to 18 holes in 1905. It is the Links course nearest to the sea at St Andrews and is used regularly for championship events. It is open every day and there is no handicap limit. Tee times can be booked by phone or in person the day before play. Locals have priority between 8.00-9.30am and 1.30-2.30pm. Online bookings through www.standrews.org.uk

Eden Course (6250 yards, par 70)

Designed by Harry S Colt and opened in 1914, the Eden is one of the most popular courses on the Links. It is open every day and there is no handicap limit. Tee times can be booked by phone or in person the day before play. Online bookings through www.standrews.org.uk

Strathtyrum Course (5620 yards, par 69)

Shorter and less testing than the other courses, the Strathtyrum opened in 1993. It is ideal for high handicappers although the bunkers are cunningly placed and the greens undulating. It is open every day and there is no handicap limit. Tee times can be booked the day before play. Online bookings through www.standrews.org.uk

Balgove Course (1520 yards, par 30)

It is open every day and times cannot be booked in advance – simply turn up and play. The green fee is the same for nine or 18 holes.

Course Information

Green Fees (20 April - 19 October)

	Adult	Under 16
Old Course	£130	£130
The Castle Course	£117.50	£59
New Course	£65	£32
Jubilee Course	£65	£32
Eden Course	£40	£20
Strathtyrum Course	£25	£12
Balgove Course	£12	£4

Tickets

Three and seven day tickets are available for all courses except the Old.

3-Day	£145 (adult)	£72 (junior)
7-Day	£290 (adult)	£145 (junior)

Balgove Course only

3-Day	£21 (adult)	£6 (junior)
7-Day	£42 (adult)	£12 (junior)

Opening Times

For full details about clubhouse opening times please contact 01334 466666.

Equipment Hire

Steel and graphite clubs and shoes can be hired from the shops in the Clubhouses. Telephone 01334 466666.



The Clubhouses



St Andrews Links has three superb clubhouses, the Links, Eden and Castle clubhouses, which are all open to the public. With first class facilities and ample parking, the clubhouses are an excellent stop for both golfers and non-golfers.

Experienced reception staff are available to give information on all aspects of golf in St Andrews and the rest of Fife.

The Links Clubhouse is a short buggy ride from the first tee of the Old Course and next to the first tees of the New and Jubilee Courses. It has a large and welcoming reception area, spacious locker rooms, lounge

and dining room with a bar, and an extensive shop.

The Eden Clubhouse is near the Golf Practice Centre and is ideally situated for golfers playing the Eden, Strathtyrum or Balgove Courses. There is a special room for junior golfers.

The Castle Clubhouse (above) overlooks the ninth and eighteenth greens of The Castle Course and features spectacular cliff top views.

All clubhouses offer varying menus with a choice of daily specials. Private parties and buffets for club dinners, celebrations and other special occasions are also welcome in the Links and Eden Clubhouses.

All changing rooms are spacious and well

equipped with lockers and overnight secure storage for golf clubs. Clubs can be cleaned using ultrasonic club cleaning equipment.

A wide range of golfwear, accessories and gifts branded with official St Andrews Links logos can be obtained from the Links Clubhouse shop, the shop behind the 18th green of the Old Course and The Old Course Shop beside the 18th fairway. Castle Course merchandise is available in the Castle Clubhouse. Golf clubs and shoes can also be hired from the Clubhouses.

The Links and Eden clubhouses are open all year every day except Christmas Day, the Castle Clubhouse opens from 1 April to 1 November 2009.

About the LINKS

Soft Spikes

Golfers are encouraged to wear shoes with plastic cleats or 'soft spikes' which do less damage than metal spikes to the greens.

Caddies

Caddies for the six Links courses can be hired through the caddie manager (tel: 01334 466633). For The Castle Course call the caddie assistant (01334 464513). Only caddies registered with the Links Trust may be used on a professional basis and caddie availability cannot be guaranteed. Caddies are paid in cash on satisfactory completion of the round and tips are at the golfer's discretion. Caddie fee is £40.

Trolleys

Battery powered trolleys (£12) or manually operated trolleys (£4) are available for hire from the starters and caddie pavilions. On the Old Course, trolleys can be used only after midday in high season.

Buggies

Two person buggies or golf carts can be hired subject to availability on the New, Jubilee, Strathtyrum and Castle courses by golfers who are either senior citizens or medical certificate holders. Hire is £18 for visitors and £10 for all yearly ticket holders.

Practice Centre

- St Andrews Links Golf Academy
- Floodlit driving range.
- 22 covered and 32 open bays.
- Special area for pitching, putting and bunker practice.
- Open every day from 7am.
- Last bucket of balls dispensed at 8pm.

To find out more ☎ 01334 474489

SINCE 1974 St Andrews Links Trust, a charitable organisation created by an Act of Parliament, has overseen the management and preservation of the Links.

Now the largest golf complex in Europe, it is responsible for about 900 acres comprising six 18 hole golf courses and one nine hole course, two turf nurseries, three greenkeeping centres, an extensive Golf Practice Centre and Academy, three clubhouses and four shops.

All surpluses are reinvested into the maintenance of the courses and the facilities.

St Andrews Links Trust
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All enquiries telephone: 01334 466666

Links Clubhouse Fax 01334 466664

Reservations Fax 01334 477036

Administration Fax 01334 479555

Website www.standrews.org.uk

Email: enquiries@standrews.org.uk

MAP of the LINKS

