



# LINKS NEWS

The Newsletter of St Andrews Links

## St Andrews Links quartet make Golf Digest Top 100



● (above) The Jubilee Course earned well deserved recognition in the Golf Digest poll.



● (below) The Castle Course leapt into 65th place in the latest international rankings from Golf Digest.

**F**our of St Andrews Links' seven courses have been listed in the prestigious Golf Digest Top 100 Courses ranking for the first time prompting the magazine to name the town as the world's "pre-eminent destination" for golf.

After only four months in operation The Castle Course has been listed at number 65 in the list, two places behind the New Course. The Jubilee Course has moved into the top 100 at number 92, while the Old Course is in second position overall.

Golf Digest is one of the leading golf publications in America. Its authoritative biannual ranking of the top 100 courses outside the US is compiled by more than 900 golf course panellists, the editors of its 23 editions around the world and a range of golf experts.

The poll appears in the May edition of the magazine which describes St Andrews as "the game's pre-eminent destination". The

magazine praises David Kidd for his work on The Castle Course and suggests it demonstrates the "continuing evolution at the Home of Golf".

Alan McGregor, chief executive of St Andrews Links Trust, which manages and maintains the seven public courses in St Andrews, said, "It is a wonderful achievement to have four courses recognised in such a definitive ranking. For The Castle Course to be included so soon after it opened is remarkable. It is also pleasing to see some well deserved recognition for the Jubilee Course. This is no mean feat when you see the calibre of the courses from around the world included in the ranking.

"A great deal of hard work goes into maintaining the courses at St Andrews Links in top condition and recognition such as this from one of the world's leading golf publications is something of which St Andrews and Scotland as a whole should be proud."

The recognition for The Castle Course follows hard on the heels of several awards. It was recognised by Travel + Leisure Golf magazine in America as the New Course of the Year and was named International Development of the Year by Golf Inc magazine in America pipping the Els Club in Dubai to the title.

The Castle Course was named as the 2008 Turf Professional Project of the Year by the Institute of Groundsmanship, the British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association (BIGGA) and some leading turfcare journalists. Golf World magazine in the UK included the course in its top 100 ranking almost as soon as it had opened.

The Old Course was once again the top course in Scotland according to the ranking, finishing ahead of Muirfield in third position, Turnberry at number five, Carnoustie at number eight, Royal Troon at fifteenth and Kingsbarns at eighteenth. The poll was topped by Royal County Down in Northern Ireland.



## Course UPDATE

### Old Course

All greens have been received an early season application of spring fertiliser to help stimulate some growth and regular top dressing will be taking place to help firm and true surfaces. Greens and selected areas of fairway will be hydrojected and we will be verticutting to remove lateral growth and thin out coarser grasses, allowing finer grasses to flourish. Watering of all areas will take place to prevent any drying out of surfaces too early in the season. New growth in weaker areas has been encouraged by overseeding and any weeds on fairways and in the rough have been spot treated. Attention to presentation is uppermost in our thoughts as we near a busy period in our golfing calendar with the St Rule and Links Trophies nearly upon us.

### New and Jubilee Courses

May is an intensive maintenance month in our calendar. Spring fertiliser is applied to promote even growth, and to allow any top dressing to be absorbed readily into the surface. Verticutting will be carried out to green surfaces to maintain smoothness and pace. We also need to apply herbicides to kill off any daisies or clover trying to establish on the fairways and semi rough areas. Wetting agent will be applied to greens to prevent any dry patch forming. Cutting frequency also increases this month, with all areas being cut at least twice per week.

### Eden Course

Now that we are into high season, course presentation takes priority and mowing frequency has been increased. We will be scarifying central areas of the older greens to thin out coarse grasses and following this with top dressing to keep the surfaces smooth and true. Wetting agent will be applied and we will also apply herbicide to selected areas as required. A growth regulator will be applied to all tees and practice greens. We will aerate greens using hydrojects, which use water injection to penetrate the surface. This system allows almost zero surface disturbance which is ideal throughout the season.

### Strathtyrum Course

The growing season is upon us and our regular cutting programme is in operation. The greens will be top dressed on a fortnightly basis to aid the trueness of ball roll. We will also overseed the greens to increase the fine fescue grass content in them. The aprons at ten and thirteen have knitted in well after their winter renovation and we will be top dressing them regularly during the early part of the season to smooth out any imperfections. Winter tees will be overseeded and all tees will be top dressed in the next few weeks. The jetting of all the drains on the Strathtyrum has been completed and drain-ends identified and exposed. Wetting agent will soon be applied to the fairways and the irrigation system has been tested in readiness for summer

### Golf Practice Centre

All chipping and putting greens will be top dressed. We will apply wetting agent and herbicide applications as required. We will start regular maintenance to the practice bunkers.

# Pro tips from the Academy:

## Besieging The Castle, with Stephen Sweeney

The Castle Course at St Andrews may be the newest addition to an already renowned family of golf courses in town but it is not to be taken lightly. With its stunning cliff top views, dramatic greens and challenging tee shots, The Castle's defences live up to its name; this is no more apparent than on the seventeenth.

After sixteen holes, with the clubhouse in sight, the seventeenth is perfectly positioned and well designed to catch out any golfer who does not have their mind fully on the task in hand.

At 184 yards, over an inlet, with nothing but disaster waiting both short and right of the green, club and shot selection is vital. Play safe to the left and flirt with the bunker and heavy rough or attack the flag and risk sending your ball to a watery grave?

The safe option is to aim at the left side of the green and to take your ball away from the trouble. This gives you a better chance of finding dry land and, with a little good fortune, the contours may take your ball to the middle of the green. However the safe shot does bring its difficulties as you are now left with a chip shot over the bunker to a down slope with the sea waiting just beyond the flag. Not an easy shot, but my ball is safe from the tee shot and a chip and a putt gives me a par.

If you are feeling brave, or if you are one down and you want to attack, then the only shot is to aim at the middle of the green and try to fade the ball to that dangerous back right pin location. You will need to take one club more than normal as the fade will not fly as far in the air. If you pull it off, you might just make birdie. Get it wrong and you will be begging for the bunker to catch it before the ball finishes down in the ocean. Even if your ball does catch the sand trap, the bunker shot requires a high lofted shot to a small plateau.

My advice is to take a close look at the yardage to the centre of the green, select the club you need and commit to the shot. Do not get greedy and do not shy away from the challenge which the seventeenth sets you. Take a par here and move on to the last tee happy in the knowledge that you have come through unscathed.

To book a lesson at the Academy call 01334 466606, email [academy@pgagm.com](mailto:academy@pgagm.com), or visit [www.pgagm.com](http://www.pgagm.com)





# Strathtyrum head Roddy B

**Roddy Barron's attempt to fund an art college course in Dundee has finally come to an end: after 35 years.**

'I couldn't get a grant and I couldn't save!' said Roddy, who has just retired from his position as head greenkeeper of the Strathtyrum Course.

He came to the Links looking to make enough money to support his studies but decided to stay. A born and bred St Andrian, Roddy found the lure of the Links irresistible.

'I was brought up at Wyvern House, which is only a few hundred yards from the Old Course. I was the first person to be employed by Walter Woods in October 1974 and working here has given me a good, healthy job; the scenery, wildlife and weather mean it is always different.'

When Roddy started work St Andrews Links Trust was in formation and there were four courses, which had been the case for sixty years.

'The progress here has been spectacular. When I arrived, there was one greenkeeping shed with a roof that was full of holes from being hit by golf balls, which meant it leaked when it rained. There were no facilities at all for visiting golfers, who had to change in their cars.'

The site of the Strathtyrum was previously pasture land and a massive drainage programme over 1989/90 was needed to prepare it for golf,

with construction taking place in 1991/92.

'There have been enormous changes to the course over the years. The creation of the tree line was a major task, whins have been planted and mounding created to give a better sense of direction. The original in-fill material used to shape the greens and surrounds was poor quality. We had all kinds of rubble dumped here to be used in the construction: fireplaces, kerbstones, even kitchen sinks. It has been a major job replacing this material over the years.'

'During March this year the greens were running at 9.5 on the stimpmeter. It used to be difficult to get them up to 8. They also drain much more quickly because of the intense coring and sanding we have carried out over the years. Most greens on the course are over 600 square metres and the fourth and eleventh is very nearly the same size as the second-sixteenth on the Old. The fairways too are in much better shape than they have ever been.'

The course is now very popular with all ages of golfer and is busy even in the winter months.

'It definitely filled a gap and there has been great demand for it. It has a good design, with an inner loop and an outer loop, which means that golfers get to play in all directions. On the other courses it tends to be out and back. The Strathtyrum is the only course that plays directly into the



● Roddy



● Roddy prepared the holes on the Old Course during Open championships.

prevailing westerlies.'

Highlights of Roddy's time at the Links include the 1978 Open won by Jack Nicklaus.

'The atmosphere on the final fairway was just great, and of course Seve's victory celebration in 1984 was wonderful to see.'

Some of the extremes of weather also stick in the mind.

'The winter of 1981/82 was very cold and there was ice down to a depth of 18 inches even in the salt sand at the estuary.'



# Barron retires after 35 years



by Barron

You could hear the ice crack over the water at night. Temperatures reached minus 15 Celsius one morning and the courses were closed for six weeks. Walter Woods had us go to the Out Head to make a 200 yard sea dyke out of wire mesh bins filled with rocks, which is still there. We had to take a brazier with us to get some warmth. As the sea waves broke the spray would freeze. There were icicles hanging from my beard: I looked like an Antarctic explorer.



● Roddy (far left) and the Madras College Pipe Band at the closing ceremony of the Alfred Dunhill Links Championship

'In 1976 the summer was so hot I remember cutting grass one afternoon in my bare feet. At that time we had a cutting squad who looked after all four courses. When working on the Old Course, I reckon that I might have walked 30 miles in a day with the hand mower.'

Roddy painted The Open championship holes from 1990.

'I used to paint the edges and the cups by hand but we developed a gadget to spray paint them, although the finishing is still done by hand. The consistency of the paint was a challenge at first. We tried mixing in car paint, but it dried in too hard. We once experimented with flour and chalk mixed in with the paint, but hot weather caused it to swell: I got a call saying there was something like a loaf of bread growing out of a hole!'

Roddy was born on Hogmanay and, appropriately, he became a champion piper.

'My father was a piper and he used to play laments every evening to lull me off to sleep. When I began to play, the pipes were bigger than me but I already knew the tunes so well it was a case of learning how to use my fingers to make the sound. I became junior champion, a position I held for seven consecutive years, and was presented with a trophy from the Queen at Braemar Highland Games. I have also been on television several times, including a show called Hobby Horse, playing the pipes in the snow.'

Roddy has been teaching the pipes at Madras College since 1996 and hundreds of children have learned to play Scotland's national instrument thanks to his dedication and enthusiasm. He also judges the solo piping competitions at a number of Highland Games.

'Madras College Pipe Band plays at University and public events in town, including the Alfred Dunhill Links Championship. We designed our own tartan for the Band, which is now on the Tartan Register.

'I'd like to step up my teaching – perhaps going into primary schools with my nephew, who teaches drums.'

Roddy is a composer as well as a skilled instrumentalist and he hopes to write more music now he has more time to do it.

'I've got a house full of instruments: a piano, five guitars, including two bass guitars from my days playing in a rock band, a clarinet, violin and other keyboards.

'I composed tunes to mark the retirement of the last Madras Rector and Head of Music for pipes and piano, and I have also done work with a brass quintet. I'd like to try something for the organ and pipes.'

One thing he has not tried much is golf.

'I played once on the Jubilee Course years ago and I did break 100 but I haven't really played since.'

A return to the Links might well be on the cards.



## Longest drive on The Castle Course



With the opening of The Castle Course on 1 April, it was time for the cattle grazing on the cliff tops and down on the shore at Kinkell to cross the golf course and head back to their summer pasture beyond the sixteenth fairway. A bale of silage on the back of a digger was all it took!

## Sunday Play

The Old Course will host three prestigious golfing events over three Sundays between 17 May and 7 June. The Local Clubs' Gold Medal takes place on 17 May, the final round of the St Rule Trophy is on 31 May and the St Andrews Links Trophy will come to a conclusion on 7 June.

## HOLES IN ONE

The star of a Bonnyrigg fourball was **Kevin Hastings** whose eight iron shot at the eleventh on the Old Course took a single bounce before disappearing underground on 20 March. Kevin is a member at Broomieknowe. On 31 March, **Jonathan Hamby** of Centreville, Virginia, used a 52 degree wedge to slay the eighth on the Eden. It was a family celebration for the Army Navy Country Club member who was playing with Tack, Brad and Chris Hamby. April's aces started with **Bob Murray**, a resident of St Andrews who saw his ball fly home on the fifth of the Eden. His perfect hit on 7 April was his first hole in one in 75 years of golfing. Mr Murray is a member at Boat of Garten. Another St Andean, **Angus Graham** of the New Club, knocked home a pitching wedge at the seventh hole on the Balgove on 12 April. It was another family affair, as he was with Callum, Euan and Scott Graham. There was a further hole in one at the eleventh of the Old Course on 13 April when **Arjan Jager** of Amsterdam struck his ideal seven iron shot at High Hole. He is now the pride of Purmerend GC. **Ashley Ricketts** took the Links limelight on 15 April when his five iron shot at the thirteenth of the New Course gave the Enville member his first ace in 35 years of trying.

## Course Information

### Green Fees (to 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.

## 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](http://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](mailto: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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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.



## The Clubhouses



**S**t 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

**S**INCE 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  
Pilmour House, St Andrews  
Fife KY16 9SF

All enquiries telephone: 01334 466666

Links Clubhouse Fax 01334 466664

Reservations Fax 01334 477036

Administration Fax 01334 479555

Website [www.standrews.org.uk](http://www.standrews.org.uk)

Email: [enquiries@standrews.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@standrews.org.uk)

## MAP of the LINKS

