

GUR

GOLF UNDER REPAIR

***COURSES COMING
OUT OF COVID***

WITH MARK MOORE

***BECOMING
A GOLF PRO***

WITH OLLY BOGGIE

***30 YEARS
ON ONE
COURSE***

ANDY IVEL

***WHY GOLF
COURSES
USE A
BROKER***

MARK DEARDEN





LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



Kingsley Melville
Editor of GUR Magazine

It's been a privilege to work with so many great contributors on the first issue of GUR Magazine.

Our aim is to showcase why golf is so important to our communities. From wildlife through to elite groundskeeping and onto British manufacturers, our magazine includes expert articles written by golf industry leaders. The advice, opinions and information included in the magazine illustrate the diversity of the game, and why it is a sport that needs to be protected.

It's perhaps an understatement to say that COVID-19 drastically impacted British golf clubs. Many of the stories included in the magazine touch on a universal narrative; courses recovering from a difficult two years. Golf has been experiencing a steady

decline over the past decade, however, post-pandemic membership has seen a surprising boom, a trend which we hope long-continues into golf's next chapter.

As golf hits a new run of form, the Club Insure team were eager to highlight the people and places which rely on the sport. Every person we spoke to, from Director to Assistant Pro to Manufacturer, offered a unique take on the state of modern golf. From forward-thinkers to traditionalists, the golf course houses every generation.

So, what does modern golf look like? Who are the faces under the brollies? I sincerely hope you, reader, receive as much joy as I did when on visitation and are able to gauge each contributor's passion for the sport.

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USING A BROKER: START TO FINISH

Contacting a broker is the most effective way to arrange your golf insurance. We talk to expert Scheme Manager Mark Dearden; he runs us through the whole process from start to finish. He explains why golf course owners and managers should be utilising the service of a broker, outlining how clubs can be best prepared as well as the risks of being underprepared.

"Golf clubs should be starting the process of arranging their insurance requirements at least three months before renewal" says Mark.

"What time of year golf courses renew is not an issue, but from my experience, the best outcome is always to use a broker."

"The process of utilising a broker begins with a visitation from one of our representatives. At Club Insure we have ten reps spread all over the country, each are experts in what golf clubs require and know what a risk-averse golf club looks like."

"The reason for a visitation is to see first-hand the current arrangements golf courses have in place. We would perform a survey of the premises; nothing too in depth, but to make sure the basics are right. The basics include security, checking cameras and alarms are in good working order, details of the machinery, general maintenance of the club and its properties – we can get a good feel for a club more or less after one visit."

"We provide a bespoke service at Club Insure and aim to build a relationship with our clients. This is because we are in it for the long-term, looking to work with clubs to aid ongoing improvements."



"We look to work with clubs who have laid down five-year, or long-term plans. This is so we can meet their expectations and adapt the policy. We also determine whether the sums insured are adequate. At Club Insure,

our cover is fully comprehensive but also flexible as to cater to the needs of the golf club."

"It is preferable that a golf club has someone living on site, whether this is a steward or a site manager – this tends to demonstrate clubs are eager to reduce risks and are aware of what their members require of them. We like to see a golf club with an active membership, playing and social."



"Our expertise at Club Insure includes privately & membership-owned clubs. All clubs should have an asset register or an inventory as to what they own. That's a huge tool, not only for the broker & insurer, but for the club in understanding what they own & utilise. If there is a major catastrophe, having this available and up to date will be essential."

"On visitation we take photos of the risks so that we can present evidence to underwriters. We know what to look out for and we have vast a degree of knowledge, seeing clubs day in day out."

"After a visitation, where supporting evidence and photographs are collected, the next step is to complete a risk presentation. We would then contact our scheme underwriters to discuss terms, terms can then be presented back to the client. Brokers recommend a selection of cover types and a sums insured, yet Club Insure aims to cover all the activities of the golf organisation."

"The cover types include Directors' and Officers' insurance which protects the officers & management of the club while carrying out their statutory duties. Employers' liability is also required as the club have a legal duty to look after their employees, protecting them should an accident occur.

Public Liability protects the club should they have been deemed to be negligent in respect to third-party injury and property claims. Buildings and Contents Insurance protect against property damage in case of incidents such as theft, fire or flood. It also covers the fencing and boundary walls of the course, whereas the greens, tees and playing surfaces are covered under specific Grounds Cover."

"Business Interruption insurance is also an important cover type. It is essential to protect the income of the club, and therefore protect the members & employees. If the Business Interruption insurance isn't correct following a fire or major catastrophe at the club, most clubs will struggle to survive – so it's important to get the cover correct to suit the membership and the organisation."

"We are always asked about what golf clubs can do to reduce their insurance premiums and policy rates. Demonstrating you have a well-managed, well-maintained and well-run club supported by its members will definitely help build confidence with insurers. Honestly, the best option is to use a broker. The role of a broker is to search the market to get the best cover at a fair price for the client."

"It's always best to be open, to have open dialogue. It's important to be insured properly in the event of a claim, and this requires the correct information being relayed to the underwriter. Once the cover is agreed, we as a broker will be able to deal with all claims without the golf club's involvement. Club Insure only use A-rated insurers, and operates on an open relationship with our golf clients.

ABOUT MARK



Mark is the Schemes Manager at Club Insure. He has built a career over 35 years in insurance and specialises in insurance for sports clubs.

Mark most regularly plays golf with his brother and his friends. His local club is Baildon Golf Club but admits he is a fair-weather golfer. He's been playing golf for over 40 years and still hasn't figured out how to fix his slice.

***“FROM MY
EXPERIENCE,
THE BEST
OUTCOME
IS ALWAYS
TO USE
A BROKER”***



THE MIND OF THE MANUFACTURER: SCOTT READMAN

Decades of experience in creative design coupled with a passion for perfection, Scott Readman Concepts specialises in bespoke golf equipment. Beguiling yet classic, SRC's custom-made products are a very rare and exclusive brand prized by European PGA professionals. The company was founded in 2009 by Scott Readman and Creative Manager Emma. We reached out to Scott Readman Concepts to hear about their experiences as a UK manufacturer in a golf market saturated by foreign brands. Scott also took us through some of his special super-secret projects, giving us a glimpse of his one-of-a-kind products and the calibre of service he offers.

It all began in England's cultural hub, the city of Bristol.

Scott became gripped by the world of golf, at the age of 16 when he became a PGA professional and dedicated his life to the game.

In his studies, he specialised in golf equipment design. For hours as a young pro, he would delicately refurbish and repair beautiful persimmon woods, then began to craft and shape his own putters and wedges for tournaments. He continued his education, building an in-depth insight for materials and the manufacturing process, continually looking for ways to improve and evolve.

In 2009, the company Scott Readman Concepts was founded. Joined by his Creative Director Emma, the two began the process of creating a collection of world class putters, covers and accessories. Focussing on quality handmade equipment that would not only perform but exhibit a unique elegance and panache, Scott carved his way into the high-end modern golf market.

Every angle, shape, texture, and detail has been explored in the creation of his products. Today you will find the SRC brand everywhere; as well as inside the bags of club golfers popular tournament professionals around the globe; on all the tours; in all the majors, The Ryder Cup and even The Olympics. From humble beginnings to the world stage and trusted by the best of the best.

Putters, headcovers, ball markers, golf bags, holdalls, drill stick covers, valuables bags, practice ball bags, apparel and headwear. SRC also offer a shot reduction clinic on an indoor green using Visio lasers and a putting simulator to analyse strokes. Upon visitation to the SRC workshop in Bristol, you will be greeted with the offer of a cuppa and biscuit.

The workshop is the golf equivalent of Willy Wonka's chocolate factory!

We asked Scott what special exclusive projects he was working on. He said he'd been working with Gene Nead, his personal favourite boutique putter maker.



Gene is an ex-Nascar driver and also a crew chief. Gene contacted SRC about making some covers for him.

Upon consultation, Scott suggested attempting to use one of his fireproof race suits as a base for the covers. Scott and Emma dissected the suit using a thread picker and a scalpel and this was the end result.

Scott was also eager to talk about when a customer asked if we could make a headcover from a signed pair of

QUINTESSENTIALLY BRITISH. UNSURPASSABLE QUALITY.

Usain Bolt's running spikes! 6 months between consultation and creation, and included is the end result. 5 putters and headcovers unlike anything you will see again. Must be the fastest golf gear on the planet!

Scott's latest project is a hand-sculpted 925 Sterling Silver putter. The 100% handmade putter pushes the limits of design to the maximum. The face is hand engraved and is made from a single piece of 925 Sterling Silver.

Although designed for the collectors market, this unique putter is a functional piece of art.

SRC design and manufacture bespoke equipment for golfers at every level. There are tour players all over the world who play with SRC. Scott has worked with Ping, Taylormade, Mizuno, Wilson, J Lindeberg, Miura, SIK golf, Tad Moore, Byron Morgan and many more.

I asked Scott about the pandemic and how it has affected his company: "Initial lockdown was extremely difficult, the golf world literally just stopped, we had to make rapid changes to survive. Fortunately, we came out the other side and continue to smash out the cool kit that simply makes us totally different from all the others!"



I queried Scott on a matter which many golfers overlook - why there are so few UK manufacturers and what its like operating in a foreign-saturated market? "Unfortunately there are very few UK manufacturers, the majority of all golf equipment comes out of China, there are also quite a few companies producing in USA, that said our customers

are based all around the world and although they often have to pay extortionate shipping costs, they still choose us because of our designs and most importantly our build quality is second to none."



I also pressed Scott on his future aspirations - where will he take SRC next? "We have so many things we want to achieve, every single day we strive to be the best. Introducing new products, new designs and innovations, the journey has literally only just began for SRC and our brains never stop whirring!"

**“WE CAME OUT THE OTHER
SIDE AND CONTINUE TO
SMASH OUT THE COOL KIT
THAT SIMPLY MAKES US
TOTALLY DIFFERENT
FROM ALL THE OTHERS!”**

An aerial photograph of a coastal area. On the left, there is an amusement park with various rides, including a roller coaster and a carousel. A small river or canal flows through the park. To the right of the river is a wide, sandy beach. A long pier extends from the beach into the sea. The sea is blue with some white surf. The text 'CLAIMS STORIES: SKEGNESS TOURIST TRAP' is overlaid on the right side of the image in large, white, italicized capital letters.

CLAIMS STORIES: SKEGNESS TOURIST TRAP



^ 12 years in insurance claims, resident expert Robert Crowther.



Marooned. The Skegness attraction had become a tourist trap throughout lockdown.

Senior Claims Handler at The Romero Group, Robert Crowther, recounts the history of a claim which saw a Skegness attraction become inoperative due to a freak weather incident.

"Our client is the proprietor of a number of attractions along the Skegness sea front area. On the morning of the 15th February 2021 he contacted our account executive to advise of a rather odd occurrence."

"It turned out that a freak highly localised weather event had resulted in around 200 tonnes of sand being picked up from the beach and very neatly deposited upon our client's pirate themed crazy golf course."

"Our client immediately realised that he was going to need the use of heavy machinery to excavate the attraction. He was understandably keen that work be completed in time for the easing of lockdown restrictions and the recommencement of domestic tourism. As such he requested the assistance of his insurers for the clean up costs."

"We reported the matter onto the client's insurers whilst we made further enquiries with the client as to what had happened and what damage might have been caused. The insurance policy itself covered clean up costs but only where there had been actual damage caused so we needed to try and ascertain if there was any physical damage. Of course, we would not be able to tell if there was any damage until the sand was excavated and the attraction could be checked. Clearly this was at odds with the clients needs as it meant that he would be incurring the clean up costs that he was looking for assistance with and there were no guarantees that the insurers would reimburse him as they would normally only reimburse costs that had been agreed beforehand. On top of this, the policy carried a £2500 excess that would be payable."

“200 TONNES HAD BEEN DEPOSITED ON OUR CRAZY GOLF COURSE”

"Our response was two-fold, in the first instance we advised the client of the difficulties he faced and as with any other claim we suggested a quote be obtained for the removal of the sand, this at least could then be passed onto insurers for a without prejudice approval. At the same time, we argued with the insurers that you cannot simply deposit such a volume of sand on an attraction such as this without expecting there to be damage. It was argued that the sand would have damaged the green putting material, also sand is both abrasive and prolonged exposure could see the sand

eating into the various pieces. "Our role as a broker is to support our clients and argue on the side of reasonable common sense. We believe we put forward a strong and sensible argument."

"It's fair to say, this was one of the more peculiar claims I'd ever experienced."

"Although in the end everything became moot; the client came back to us to advise that he was able to get the attraction reinstated for less than his policy excess, so the claim was withdrawn."

BRS GOLF: DRIVING GOLF INTO THE MODERN AGE

Founded in Belfast in 2003, BRS Golf is now the most installed tee time management system in the world. BRS Golf has over 3,500 golf course clients across 14 countries. In the UK & Ireland alone, they have in excess of 700,000 registered members using the BRS Golf online booking technology, facilitating millions of rounds every year.

We asked BRS Golf to outline the recent uptake in digital booking systems:

"Our customer research shows the golf industry had moved recently and rapidly toward online booking payments; a feature sparked by the pandemic. Furthermore, our research shows the move will continue and digital golf is here to stay."

"From member and visitor tee times to subscription billing and competition management – contactless technology allows club staff and golfers to feel safe while improving efficiency and enhancing the user experience."

"Our new and improved product suite allows clubs to manage their whole operation from one place. Memberships can be efficiently managed, that's all aspects from billing to online payments to customised subscriptions schemes and offers."

"Our tee sheet is the pride and joy of BRS Golf. Number one in the world, the sheet has an average up time of 99.98% making it the most reliable booking system ever. Club operations can be integrated with the system as well as all your online transactions, green fees and payment processes; all services can be managed from one place."

"Technology is starting to revolutionise golf. We have seen a massive spike in shorter forms of golf, with families, people new to the game and those returning to the sport again keen to play nine holes. The same applies for twilight rounds, with BRS able to give live statistics and records."

"The new wave of golfers has also seen an uptake in flexible memberships. This is an option for those who may not want to commit to a full membership. BRS Golf offer a self-managing points-based system that comes at no added cost to golf courses, helping them cater to more players."



"Members are able to book casual rounds of golf through the companion app. Able to see how busy the course is before arrival; we've found this has helped spread custom for golf courses and therefore also increase the numbers of players they service per day. This also assists those wishing to remain socially distant after the pandemic. Checkout and payment takes seconds with our visitor bookings."

BRS Golf are allowing golf courses to go mobile responsive, become more accessible and get closer to their consumers by adapting to the modern age. The global COVID-19 pandemic has changed the way we live our lives and technology now plays a pivotal role in helping us stay connected. Golf clubs are no exception.

**“TECHNOLOGY
IS STARTING TO
REVOLUTIONISE
GOLF”**



BECOMING A GOLF PRO: OLLY BOGGIE

The established Bradford Golf Club has been a mainstay for Yorkshire golfers since its redesign in 1923. The par 71 championship course is one of the oldest in the area, and it's the dedicated members and hard-working staff which have helped the club maintain its high standards. One of the first faces you see when visiting a golf club is that of the pros. These young men and women lead a life powered by electric buggies and 6am starts. To be the best, pros must live and breathe golf.

Olly Boggie is the assistant pro at Bradford Golf Club. At 27 years old he has completed his PGA qualifications and is making strides in his role at Bradford, a role he has held for over three years. I asked Olly for some insight into what it is to be a golf pro, from working in the shop to helping out on the course.

We sit on the club veranda, overlooking the 18th green. He talks me through the experiences of a golf professional – listing his duties and responsibilities. We also touch on the changing times facing golf pros and how the club are making steps to adapt to a post-pandemic age:

“I’ve been working as a pro just gone five years; I went down the teaching route but there is also the playing route. To be a pro you have to like golf, play golf, be good at golf, and when you are studying you play a lot of golf.”

I ask him about his handicap: “Well, I started playing seriously quite late.” Olly surprised me when he mentioned he didn’t play as a child and only received his first handicap when he was 19. “I played every day non-stop for two years, and when I got good enough and decided golf was what I wanted to pursue, I did the PGA course.”

“You have to be off 4 or below to qualify as well as meet certain requirements. I was off 2, and then turned pro at 22. The course is three years, distance learning, similar to a university course, including a couple of residential. And we do a few online assessments which cover the retail side, the business and finance side as a self-employed operator, the playing side, and then the teaching side. I focussed a bit more on the teaching.”

I asked Olly about his main responsibilities specific to Bradford Golf Club: “My big responsibility is service to members. We run the shop and deal with requests on golf day, charity days, competitions.”

"We are front of house. And then I do the teaching as well." I suggest him giving me some lessons and ask how I would arrange some at Bradford. He points over to the bar – "They basically just come to me, a guy just asked me at the bar; he couldn't keep it on the fairway... his putting was all over the place..."

"A lot of it comes from having a chat. Because we see the members so often, most of the work comes from people asking me to help improve their game."

I say that sounds much more social and less digitised than I expected. "We've looked at using booking system for lessons, but no, we don't. We may do in the next 12-18 months. Booking systems help newer members, and with diaries and taking payments. But most return to us because they like having a chat with me for an hour." He smiles and sips his drink. I mention how most players learn from their parents. "Well, Dad's often teach what they do, and invariably it's not right."



We move on and I cheekily ask Olly if he's ever won any competitions. He laughs: "I don't play enough. I've got a competition this Monday (he's referencing the Shipley Pro-am at Shipley Golf Club) so I'll do some practice today, Sunday and Monday morning. It'll be me and three amateurs, but playing

was never what I wanted to do having turned pro. We have a few members here who make a living off golf, both are younger than me."

We move to sit inside and I comment on how good it is to see golfers in the clubhouse since the pandemic. He greets a few members and then comments: "Post-COVID from our experience is just the number of people that have got into golf in past two years. So many... so many. Either people that have taken it up for the first time and want lessons, or casual players who want to become members. Because it was one of the first sports to reopen, it just took off."

"This summer we've been ridiculously busy, as has every course. Naturally it winds down in the winter, but purely the demand of people has changed as well as the golf clubs gaining 30, 50, 60 new members. And after the Ryder Cup, in October we expect the business to drop off but we'll see."

We finish our discussion by circling back to young players wanting to become pros. "Being a pro is great! There's a lot of variety. If you're someone who's into golf, played a lot of golf, and want to get better, go for it! But from my experience, it's best to have a line you want to go down – because I didn't and I wish I'd had more of an idea of where I wanted to end up. You see people being a PGA pro to full-time teaching, to being in retail, to club fitting, working on the tour-vans, some are brand reps."

"And there's the YouTube market now with fun golf challenges, club reviews, ball reviews, tips on getting better. But I would say have a passion within the learning; if it's opening a golf shop or selling clubs or playing full-time..." Olly is interrupted and called away to the pro shop; we thank him for his time and he notes: "As with all walks of life; with golf, the process is easier if you know what you want to do."





WILDLIFE AND ECOLOGY AT IPSWICH GOLF CLUB

***“THE GOLF COURSE IS AN
ESSENTIAL LOCAL HAVEN FOR
WILDLIFE IN AN INCREASINGLY
URBANIZED ENVIRONMENT”***



Heather on 6th

We ask Neil Sherman, Conservation Greenkeeper at Ipswich Golf Club, about their progress with ecology projects on the course:

"At Ipswich Golf Club we have long recognized that the course is not just a wonderful area to play golf but is also a very good site for wildlife. Away from the playing surfaces, many different habitat types can be found, including heathland, acid grassland, wetlands, lakes and woodland. This high diversity supports lots of different species of flora and fauna including some that are rare and protected."

For many years the Ipswich Golf Course's staff have managed these habitats in order to improve and maintain wildlife activity, including occasional guidance from Natural England under their Higher Level Stewardship scheme. Recognition of this good work within the golf industry has resulted in Ipswich Golf Club winning the national Golf Environment Awards (GEAs) top prize for best environmental golf course twice and their conservation greenkeeper award once.

Neil continues: "The main special habitat that needs the most intensive management is the heathland. Golf courses nationally are custodians of some large areas of this globally rare habitat, many of which are taking steps to preserve it. The extensive areas of heather and acid grassland, which look superb in late summer when flowering, need constant management to prevent the encroachment of trees and bracken which would swamp it.

"Work has also been undertaken to enlarge and join together blocks of heather to allow the heathland associated species to move more freely around the site. Gorse, another heathland shrub also needs regular cutting to keep it young and vigorous and stop it's spread into more open areas. Its bright coconut scented yellow flowers look great in spring and are much loved by bees."

"Wildlife found on our estate include woodlarks, common lizards and many species of solitary bees and wasps. Linnets and green hairstreak butterflies can be found around the gorse."

“HIGH DIVERSITY SUPPORTS LOTS OF DIFFERENT SPECIES OF FLORA AND FAUNA”

"Wetland habitats are also found along the valley of the Mill stream through the centre of the site. Also present are areas of open water, reed-beds and fen meadows. We manage these by cutting sections on rotation annually and clearing the cut material to stop the build up of nutrients and prevent reversion to woodland."

"Species living in these habitats include otters, little egrets, kingfishers and numerous dragonflies around the lakes. Harvest mouse, water vole and reed warblers are found in the reedbeds. The fen meadows are very good for a range of wildflowers including ragged robin, cuckoo flower, marsh marigold and southern marsh orchids."

"Also present on the estate are areas of woodland. These range from wet alder carr woodland in the Mill river valley to mixed native woodland in the centre of the site containing numerous open glades. The glades are mown annually to stop tree encroachment and dead log piles have been created within the woods for invertebrates and fungi to use. Nestboxes have also been put up and are monitored annually – the data of which is sent to the national database."

"Wildlife found in the woods includes numerous bats, purple hairstreak butterflies, a great variety of moths and Britain's largest beetle - the stag beetle."



Squirrel Trail



Common Lizard



Green Hairstreak



Nestbox



Water Vole



Male Stag Beetle

"By improving the estate for ecology we are also creating a better site to play golf as the open areas around the playing surfaces have improved the turf quality, so it's a win-win situation."

"Seeing wildlife whilst playing golf makes it a more interesting experience. We regularly inform the membership of recent sightings; our members show a keen interest in wildlife on the course. Also, progress on our ecology projects are updated on the Course Manager's weekly blog, available to the members via social media."

"By putting the word out to the public people are now seeing that the golf course is not just a monoculture of mown grass, but is an essential local haven for wildlife in an increasingly urbanized environment."

NEIL SHERMAN



Conservation Greenkeeper at Ipswich Golf Club Ltd, Purdis Heath, Suffolk.

Neil is a Suffolk based naturalist and conservationist with main interests in moths, butterflies, birds and heathland. He is also a Suffolk county recorder for moths.

***GOLF COURSES
NATIONALLY
ARE CUSTODIANS
OF THIS GLOBALLY
RARE HABITAT***

GOLF COURSES ADAPTING THROUGH COVID



Golf, for a period of time, was the only sport permitted through the pandemic. Safe spacing and local restrictions prevented many sports venues from opening, yet golf courses were offered an exception. Course managers and operatives had to obey strict regulations and update protocols. But how have the ramifications of the pandemic affected our local courses?

We asked Mark Moore to discuss with us the story of Moor Allerton during the COVID crisis...

"I started as Director of Golf at Moor Allerton in October 2020, so seven months into the COVID pandemic. There was a lockdown in November 2020 and then we came back and then another January until March. I would say it was a unique experience to say the least..."



^ Mark, ex-PGA Pro Coach, now Director of Golf at Moor Allerton.

I ask Mark how the lockdowns and restrictions affected Moor Allerton Golf Club: "On a day-to-day basis, we were affected by having to follow government guidelines – when there's a lockdown there's a lockdown, so members can't play. But unlike gyms, clothing stores and such; who've received rebates by way of government money and they have no income or costs; our members carried on paying their fees when lockdown was on."

"That was necessary because, as a business, golf courses cost a lot to run. Hundreds and hundreds of thousands of pounds per year to run, to maintain that..." – He points toward the sprawling golf course outside the clubhouse window – "...and if you leave it for a month, you've lost it for a year or even longer."

"The golf course, especially ours here at Moor Allerton, you'd be surprised at how delicately balanced it is – the amount of thought that goes into maintaining it and the structure that goes into it. When COVID lockdown was off, the greenkeepers were still here maintaining the golf course even though no one was playing it."

"We carried on incurring costs, not just the costs of the staff and the machinery but also the products that get used. Yet our members, who are very loyal, carried on paying their fees – some were happier about doing it than others – but we couldn't afford to stop the payments. Golf has gone through maybe fifteen or twenty years of recession. Golf has struggled for a long time. There are very few golf clubs sat on cash reserves, so we need that cash flow in order to have something for members to come back to."

"IT WAS A UNIQUE EXPERIENCE TO SAY THE LEAST..."



"When members came back, March 29th 2021, at that point we had the rule of six for sitting down and eating, wearing masks internally in the clubhouse."

"Logistically on the golf course we had no furniture so the benches were taken away, the bins were covered up, the flags were not to be touched, all of the rakes were removed. Bunkers became ground-under-repair but didn't get raked, actually some people brought their own little mini rakes, but this created a long-term issue for the bunkers because they compacted over time. After six months the sand had got so hard packed that you couldn't rake it."

"There have been some longer-term issues but our membership has been very

supportive. In the last year and a half we have 170 new members. Golf is experiencing a boom and in the fullness of time I think we will understand why: Maybe the publicity, maybe people working from home having more time in the evening..."

I asked Mark whether he could argue COVID has had a positive impact for the sport of golf: "I think COVID changed people's perceptions of what they want. If someone's being cooped up, then fresh air suddenly seems a lot more important than it used to. Of our 170 new members there will be some who will leave in a year as other options are available again. But we will have to see how it looks next season."



I ASK MARK MOORE ABOUT THE ADVANTAGES OF MANAGING 27 HOLES:

He describes Moor Allerton Golf Course as more similar to a golf complex. They own 27 holes which are active at all times. Each 9 starts and ends at the club house and for competitions can be changed up, so guests are likely to play a different round each visit. "I believe our model is future proof, it puts us in a far stronger position than other clubs."

"If a business man came to me with a big lump of money and a big lump of land and said to me 'I want to build a golf course - I would say '27 or 36 holes?' If you want to future proof your business, do not build an 18 hole golf course, just don't do it, because its so limiting."

"Obviously we have higher costs; 27 holes means there's much more land to look after, more machinery, more greenkeepers, more

products, but a much greater capacity. I wouldn't want to be without that."

"For me, as a manager, you think 27 holes is 50% more than 18 holes. But in actuality, it's more like 100% more, its closer to two golf courses. And because visitors can tee off later before it starts to get dark, we can extend the tee off times. The 18 hole course ends at 4pm, but the 9 hole course can go all the way until 6pm. So with 27 holes its more like 120% more because the 9 hole golf course can be utilised until later in the day."

"27 holes is a fantastic asset for me, as a new manager. It's not a golf course to manage it's a golf complex, and I like the challenge of it. 27 holes doesn't make things easier - we designate a 9 hole per day and so people get a different experience."

WHO DO YOU WORK WITH MOST CLOSELY AS A DIRECTOR OF GOLF?



and I work in the office, that means Gill's in charge of me.

Paul Bolster, Catering Manager; Lewis Clarke, the Head Pro; and Adam Matthews, Course Manager; I work exclusively with these people every day. Its so important to have a good team around you as a Director of Golf.

And then we have volunteer members, Accountant David Wood and Director of Finance Carl Hegarty who help me manage the finances of the business. Our chairman is very good to me, Stephen Mack. I see Stephen every day, he comes into my office every morning, and we've found we share the same perspective on a lot of things, both within and away from golf. I'd say this relationship makes my job easier, and that I can do my job with confidence."

Mark: "My anchor is Gill. Gill Pretty has been here near 17 years, she is the absolute cornerstone of this place.

It could be something from 15 years ago and Gill will know where the paperwork for it is. I am terrified for her retirement and trying to work here without her. But, you need to have a laugh with the people you get on with; and we say since Gill's Office Manager,

"Very rarely do we get people complaining about this system. Yes our members have certain 9's they prefer; some of the less energetic members like the top 9 because it involves less walking. And the middle 9 is the most picturesque with its undulating greens, whereas the first 9 is the most challenging with its doglegs."

"Each 9 has it's own character, but they were all built by the same architect at the same time, hence there is consistency amongst them. There is nothing worse than a golf course with a completely different 9 holes,

a different architect, different type of grass, different atmosphere. But our 9s all play the same in the sense that the tees, greens, grass and speed of play are the same. But they each have their own character which makes them quite unique. If I was pushed I'd say the middle 9 is my favourite because of its view of the clubhouse."

"With the golf boom we are experiencing, I firmly believe 27 holes puts us in the best position to cater to an increase in membership."

THE GOLFERS OF CLUB INSURE

FOR THE BEST GOLF INSURANCE, USE A BROKER WHO CAN GET YOU FROM TEE TO GREEN.

Golf insurance carries unique risks and challenges, course owners should trust the responsibility over insurance policies to those who know the sport and understand why golf is vital to British culture. Club Insure are experts in golf course, clubhouse and business insurance; dedicated to keeping clubs protected and secure.

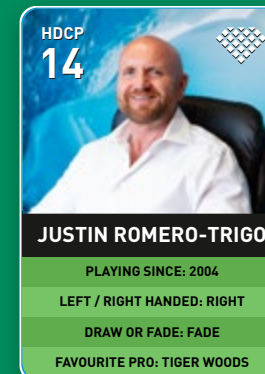
We believe we are the ideal broker for your club because we are passionate about the sport, and that passion comes from our people. To get to know the people behind the policies, we asked some of our Club Insure golfers to wax-lyrical about their golfing ability.

They tell us about their game and which player inspired them to take up the sport:



DANIEL CRACKNELL

I started playing golf more regularly in 2008. My home club is Garforth Golf Club. I play off 18 and my favourite professional golfer is Tommy Fleetwood, I always enjoy watching him play. The best I've played at is Royal Lytham & St. Annes Golf Club. Though I've always wanted to play at TPC Sawgrass.



JUSTIN ROMERO-TRIGO

My home club is Alwoodley Golf Club in Leeds and my handicap is officially 14 – however often I feel like I should be at 18. A favourite club of mine which I've played at is Gleneagles Resort. But the club I've always wanted to play at is Augusta National, or Pebble Beach.



NICK HOWELL

I'll be honest, I was born with an iron in hand. I'm currently looking for a new club, I need to find a club with the right course for me and must do a great bacon sandwich. I'm as good with either hand, which says a lot about my game. Though I tend to choose my right and hit a slice. I am yet to hit a hole in one, plenty of holes in 10 though.



VICTORIA ROMERO-TRIGO

I started my membership and playing golf regularly in 2006. My home club is Moor Allerton Golf Club where I have a handicap of 24. My favourite place I've played at is Vilamoura Old course in Portugal. But I'd love to play St. Andrews for the incredible history.



“I LIKE TO KEEP MYSELF BUSY, I SPEND MORE TIME HERE THAN I DO AT HOME.”

Lewis Clarke, Head Golf Professional at Moor Allerton Golf Club. Lewis was made Head Professional at 26, having been associated with Moor Allerton since 17. Having done his PGA qualifications, Lewis has taught golf in California, Palm Springs, and at some more very prestigious courses, he's a qualified Club Welfare Officer with England Golf, and recently became Head Pro at the start of 2021.

We spoke to Lewis, asking him about his day to day responsibilities, his routine and how he's found life as a relatively young Head Pro and Club Welfare Officer:

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A GOLF WELFARE OFFICER



"A day in the life of me? Well I get up at about 6am, and come to the course to open up the shop. Its opens 8am through the week, 7am through the weekend. And from there it depends on the plan of the day; I might be teaching, I might be looking after the shop."

"I used to play a lot more but the majority of my time now is spent teaching. I am juggling responsibilities but it's something I enjoy."

"I have an indoor performance room, kitted out by Mizuno. We use FlightScope and V1 Sports software for teaching. Depending on the client I'll either go indoors or outdoors, however my custom fit is always in the performance room."

"We use BRS as our booking system, it's ideal as a portal for me to see who's on the facilities. It's also useful for making the rotas. The only issue is there is no administrative app, there are apps for users to book but no backdoor. So I have to go through the shop computer or my phone admin. But it's a good system, it makes everything easier and organised for me."

"We liaise with the green-staff to make sure the course is prepped, and also making sure the buggies are ready for the day. But mostly, I am the first port-of-call; it's about welcoming societies and competitors."

"I like to keep myself busy, I spend more time here than I do at home. I teach up until 10pm sometimes; if someone wants a golf lesson, I'm here."

"Every club must have a Welfare Officer, and it's good practice to have a member of the PGA as the representative. I took over the role in April, having completed my DBS checks previously. It's very much a background role, and it involves all aspects of the golf club, not just the juniors but also new members."



"I ask my staff to try to make everyone feel welcome. Key responsibilities include keeping on top of membership for juniors, ensuring they are safe and able to go out on the course, they know emergency procedures, provide some tuition. It's all the dos and don'ts really. And this applies to all members to be fair."

"I'll be keeping on top of etiquette, good practice statements and improvements now we are moving into the off-season. But, fingers-crossed, I've not had a major incident happen yet."

"As a golf professional and welfare officer, I work most closely with Mark Moore, our Director of Golf. Gill Pretty in the office keeps everything tied together, Paul Bolster the Catering Manager and Adam Matthews the Course Manager are also essential. We have a meeting every Wednesday morning, discussing the week, what's upcoming and ensure everyone knows what's happening. This can be hole selection, maintenance, comments from members, and when everyone is contactable."

**"I ASK MY
STAFF TO MAKE
EVERYONE
FEEL WELCOME"**



GOLFSTREAM COMES OUT OF COVID STRONGER AND MORE AGILE

We spoke to Golfstream
about how COVID affected
their business process:



"In the early stages we focused on what we could do to survive as there were so many unknowns, but around September last year we started to have a better understanding of what the future looked like and it encouraged us to resume pursuing new products and finalising new ranges."

"Combined with Brexit, the pandemic has given us a lot more work to do. Brexit has some paperwork challenges but, for example, we are still managing to get product to mainland Europe within three days, and Ireland quicker than that, so we're managing the situation pretty well."

Product demand is incredibly good but cost management has been and still is vital. "Being a medium sized company we have the advantage of being more flexible and a little more agile and are able to respond quickly to situations and market forces. We've been able to manage our cost base while looking after our staff too, so on balance I think we have come out stronger than we went in."

WHAT ARE THE KEY LESSONS YOU'VE LEARNED?

"When the chips are down and when the world seems like it's going to end, look for the upsides and what you can do to benefit your customers."

"Early on in lockdown we offered drop shipping for our pros and we were flexible with payments – both of which helped enormously. In return the guys we supported with these initiatives have been really strong in supporting us once golf resumed."

HAS COVID CHANGED THE WAY YOU OPERATE?

"During the pandemic, we had staff working from home and we changed our working hours. We're pretty well back on to normal working now. But what I've done is extend

my staff working on the busy days of Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and they now get a half day on a Friday instead. The staff like it as it gives them more space for their activities outside of the workplace which is great for their physical and mental wellbeing."



GOLFSTREAM IS THE UK'S BIGGEST SUPPLIER OF TROLLEY SPARES, HOW IS DEMAND FOR TROLLEY SPARES?

"The key parts that go wrong with machines are motors, clutches, gearboxes and wheels. We supply all of these and a whole lot more besides, our issue has been getting product. Things are much better now and we have regular deliveries of large numbers of spare parts that help keep on top of demand."

"We ship thousands of parts the same day they arrive with us and we are extremely proud of the fast turn around on orders. We also benefit when other manufacturers discontinue parts and trolleys, we can help golfers maintain non-current machines for some years after the manufacturers has discontinued them."

WHAT'S NEW IN THE RANGE FOR THIS YEAR?

"We have the new POWATECH range of lithium batteries launched earlier this year. It's a value product that offers incredibly good performance but without the fancy bits e.g. the USB charging port that you see on the Caddycell lithium range - but crucially still fits all major trolley brands in the market place."

"We're really pleased with our new winter accessories range this year. The new wheel covers are great for making sure the mud and the grass stay on the course where they belong and not in the boot of the car."

"The insulated caddy pack is great for keeping food/drinks either hot or cold as well as being a great place for your wallet and keys and the Winter mitts allow you to operate the electric trolley using your thumbs whilst your hands are inside keeping warm."



"It's clear Golfstream not only survived but are thriving post-pandemic. Working hard through the lockdown has helped them hit the ground running. They hope to take advantage, like many other British manufacturers, of this new golf boom."

30 YEARS ON ONE COURSE

Andy Ivel is the longest serving member of the greenkeeping team at Moor Allerton golf club. Overseeing the 27 hole course for 30 years, Andy has forgotten more about greenkeeping than many will learn in their lifetime.

Described as “invaluable” by course manager Adam Matthews, Andy has no doubt tended every blade of grass at the West Yorkshire club.

Famously Andy has been at Moor Allerton “longer than even he can remember” so who better to talk to about the changing times of golf groundskeeping.

I meet Andy on a sunny Thursday morning, midway through his workday. The team have already been up since five, and Andy’s sat on the back of a small three-wheeled motor going up and down the 8th hole. He’s towing a piece of machinery which involves two orange brushes, rolling and sweeping away sand near the approach to the raised green.



He drives over and greets me; I ask what he's working on: "I'm top-dressing." His large smile is infectious, then he points to the towed orange brushes. "This is a Sand Pro and, at the back, our Sweep-N-Fill. It is able to rake the sand off the fairways and greens. It's used for top-dressing, which is where you fill the tiny holes in the ground with sand – we like to use dry sand, a mix of 70/30 of Mansfield sand. We do this once or twice a year per section and today we are preparing some of the approaches."



The fleet of Toro SandPro at Moor Allerton are used to pull equipment across the more delicate parts of the golf course, such as the bunkers and greens. The attached oscillating brushes make up the Sweep-N-Fill, they rotate in opposite directions flicking up the sand and efficiently filling the holes in the ground. They use Mansfield moist MM35-grade sand.

"We've very much got our own way of doing things here at Moor Allerton, probably due to Adam (Matthews, Course Manager) being so young. It's changed from my, sort of, generation – the old school. Back in the day we wouldn't have this or all the machinery, and instead we'd be doing it by hand, and you can imagine how long that took."

"But that's what we used to do. I've been working at Moor Allerton for 30 years now." I told him that Course Manager Adam had described Andy as "coming with the furniture" which makes him laugh loudly. "He's right!

I've worked under three head greenkeepers and obviously times change.

With Adam, this is definitely the modern way, instead of it being hard labour. Years back it was all spades, barrows, top-dressing by hand. Shifting two tonne of sand is now much easier with the machinery we've got, as you can imagine."

I note how good the greens and fairways look – having played the course the week prior, I knew first-hand the electric speed of the greens. I mention the difficulty of the course and he notes how the team are focussed on the high quality of golf as well as the handsomeness of the course.

They aim for the highest standard possible; the club having run PGA EuroTour Pro events in the past; including an ongoing aeration programme and a new greens iron. The team are each specialists and everyone has the opportunity to learn how use each piece of new equipment: "The club has definitely moved into a more modern age," Andy chimes.

"The team has been up since five. Because in winter there's less hours, we work in lieu gaining hours during the season. And we are coming to the end of the season now (it's September) so there's work to be done. But it's because of all this machinery that the six of us can get it all done!"

Moor Allerton have just signed an agreement with Russell's for all the groundcare machinery. I note how well-kept the tractors and mowers are, and Andy regards how some local courses have requested use of their equipment: "If they can do a job up here, they can do a job anywhere. We often get snow so we need the right stuff."

Andy signs off, saying with a Cheshire cat grin...

“SPENDING 8 HOURS A DAY ON A GOLF COURSE IS NOT TOO BAD,”



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“GOLF IS AT THE HEART OF CLUB INSURE. IT WAS A PLEASURE TO BRING THIS PASSION PROJECT TO LIFE.”

NOT ONLY DO WE WISH TO CAPTURE THE EXPERIENCES OF THOSE WHOSE LIVELIHOOD RELY ON THE SPORT... WE WISH TO PROTECT THE SPORT.

Golf clubs are a hugely intensive business but also remain a second home, loved and cared for by us Brits. Golf courses take up twice as much land in England as housing, and as with our homes, no two golf clubs are the same. I firmly believe each club deserves to be listened to and understood.

Club Insure is a leading provider of comprehensive golf club insurance policies. We work with a panel of 'A' rated specialist golf insurers to make sure our clubs are comprehensively covered if the unexpected happens. On visitation our aim is to get on your wavelength and understand the specific needs of your club. As you'd expect, our service is completely tailored, and no policy is the same.

I'd be delighted to speak to you about your insurance policy, the risk management you have put in place and the financial welfare of your golf club. My personal details are written below.

It's been a pleasure to put together such diverse and exploratory articles and to see how clubs are fairing post-COVID.

I thoroughly hope you've enjoyed reading GUR Magazine. This wouldn't have been possible without our amazing contributors and the guys in the marketing team.

Well-away,

Kingsley Melville

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