

Desert Storm

When setting out to do my little pieces/blogs/musings, I set myself a limit on the number of words for each piece. I estimated somewhere around the 500 to 600 word count would be sufficient. Enough to keep your attention but not too much the bore you – some might say I should stop now!

To put down on paper all that there is to say about the dreaded sand trap this piece could spread into 3 or maybe even 4 parts.

Quite possibly, bunkers are the one subject that members consistently, and visitors occasionally, have had reason to comment the most on over the 2 years in my time as Greens Convenor. At one particular Greens meeting we spent almost 45 minutes on the subject, - the meeting only lasted 90 minutes!

I'm not expecting much to change during my time as Captain, (and so far it hasn't!!)

Contrary to the belief of many, bunkers are actually a hazard, or should I say used to be. The new Rules of Golf no longer uses the word "hazard". Bunkers are now one of the 5 defined areas of the Golf Course. The Wikipedia definition (I know, not the greatest authority on all things golf), of a bunker is "shallow pits filled with sand and generally incorporating a raised lip or barrier, from which the ball is more difficult to play from than grass."

Easier to play from than grass!! Have they seen some of the rough at Tain! I think maybe “cut grass” might be more accurate.

Bunkers were originally created on links land, by sheep or cattle finding hollows to shelter in to escape from the extreme weather conditions. The animal hooves would have broken down the turf within the hollows exposing the sand beneath, thereby creating the first bunkers. Things have now moved on and they are now built by skilled turf technicians to exacting standards. Although I don't think one of our Sutherland neighbours would be too impressed if some of their own resident cattle were to return to the old way of creating bunkers at their own course.

How far has the development of bunkers come? For those of us sad enough to feel the need to subscribe to watching golf at home when not playing or working at the Golf Club, we will have all seen the variety of artificially designed sand traps at courses where the pampered few ply their trade. Drive-In traps, some bigger than the size of Tennis Courts that can be “raked” by someone sat on a small tractor and producing surfaces that even hackers could flush a hybrid out of. No wonder the golf club manufactures stopped marketing Sand Wedges!!

Fortunately, at Tain we don't have any of these manicured beaches with ice white sand in them, and our bunkers are much more typical of those found on some of the great links

courses throughout the UK. These, and our own bunkers are supposed to be small pot bunkers, with steep sides that follow the contours of the land and gather any stray or misplaced shot into the centre of them.

Straight away I can hear you shouting at your ipad or desktop, “WELL THAT NEVER HAPPENS TO MY BALL!”

Sadly “this”(anagram) happens! And just think, if it hadn't been for Course designers and our hard working Green Staff, instead of sitting in a purposely designed and an often well-presented hazard you could have been in a whole different world of crap – literally.

Further bunker related ramblings to follow soon.

Here for a good time, not a long time¹

22 down – 82 to go