

Away days – a fine day out to a Perthshire pearl

Perthshire's nine hole golf course celebrates its 30th anniversary.

The golf course's pearl anniversary coincides with the Menzies family owning the Mains of Taymouth Country Estate for 100 years. "Perthshire's finest nine holes".

In what was a major feat of engineering completed over a two year period – to turn farmland into a challenging 3,026 yard course – Estate owner Robin Menzies, assisted by his late father Duncan and a couple of estate workers, designed and built the Taymouth Golf Course, which is now a major draw for locals and visitors alike, in 1991-2.

A Civil Engineering graduate, who had a huge passion for the game of golf, Robin predominantly had only one JCB to help him in the huge task of turning the rich farmland – home to grazing cattle for 100 years – into a nine hole golf course.



Robin said: “2022 is shaping up to be a very significant year for us here at Mains of Taymouth Country Estate, with the Mains of Taymouth Course turning thirty years old, alongside the landmark milestone of a Century of ownership of the entire estate being reached by our family.”

“The past few years have obviously been very challenging due to the Covid pandemic. Golf was one of the first sports allowed to resume after the first lockdown and I am sure was a source of solace and companionship for many people. We’ve always been really proud of the Mains of Taymouth Course which has become a major asset to our five star holiday estate. It’s well used by locals too though, which was one of our aims in originally building it. We wanted to supplement the many fine courses in the area and have our own course for all golfers to enjoy. Dad had the foresight all those years ago to decide to diversify from farming into leisure. He wanted to attract more visitors to Kenmore, and was very much the driving force

behind achieving the planning permission for change of use of the land from farming to leisure,” added Robin.

“Once we knew this was obtained, in 1989/90, I bought the JCB excavator and started work on the course the following July.”

Fresh from building motorways as a Civil Engineering graduate, Robin approached the task with the same meticulous planning: “In many ways, building a golf course is very similar to building roads – you plan out every stage very carefully, but in this case I had to complete the vast majority of the hard physical work myself!”

Along with help from his father, Duncan, also a keen golfer, Robin had some assistance from the farmhand at the time, John McLaren and the then bistro barman, Raymond Dunn.

“It was very tough going, but we were lucky to have own quarry nearby, from which to source gravel and sand to infill the course, with some 7,000 tons being used,” said Robin.

“This saved us thousands of pounds in materials, as building a golf course is no mean feat in terms of expenditure. Labour was certainly harder to estimate as I remember thinking that screening the soil would take two days when it actually took three weeks’ hard solid labour.”



Over the 24 months it took in total to create the course, some 400 young trees were planted, there was extensive mowing & drainage work, and grass areas were cut with soil stripped from the tees, greens & greenside bunkers. After infilling with the gravel and sand, grass was then grown on the aprons, greenside bunkers and tees.

“We used a soil sand mix of 20%/80% on the greens, to a minimum depth of nine inches, followed by eight weeks of additional turf work,” said Robin.

Robin explained that his plan was always to design each hole of the course around natural features and contours. As he went along, he realised the enormous potential of the land, and – in his words – “made everything bigger and better than originally anticipated to produce something of real quality.”

“My own favourite hole is the second, the tee for which is built within a “roundel”, said Robin.

“Certainly, we could not have asked for a better setting for the course,” said Robin. “In many ways the land was already natural golfing terrain with steep hills either side and plenty of trees and natural vegetation, all set in the most picturesque surroundings. It was certainly inspiring and so peaceful.”

Finished Robin Menzies: “Mains of Taymouth Golf Course is very much part of Highland Perthshire’s overall golfing offer, and for that we are all very proud.”

“The course has matured beautifully, and still offers us yet more potential for further development.”

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