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THE OPEN
CHAMPIONSHIP



The Royal Birkdale
Golf Club
17-20 July 2008

A guide to the management of the links
for wildlife and conservation

R&A

INTRODUCTION

The Open Championship 1998 at Royal Birkdale saw The R&A publish its very first wildlife and conservation guide. The success of this booklet resulted in the guides

becoming an annual feature at each Open since 2000 and it gives me great pleasure to introduce this year's edition which sees a return to these famous links.

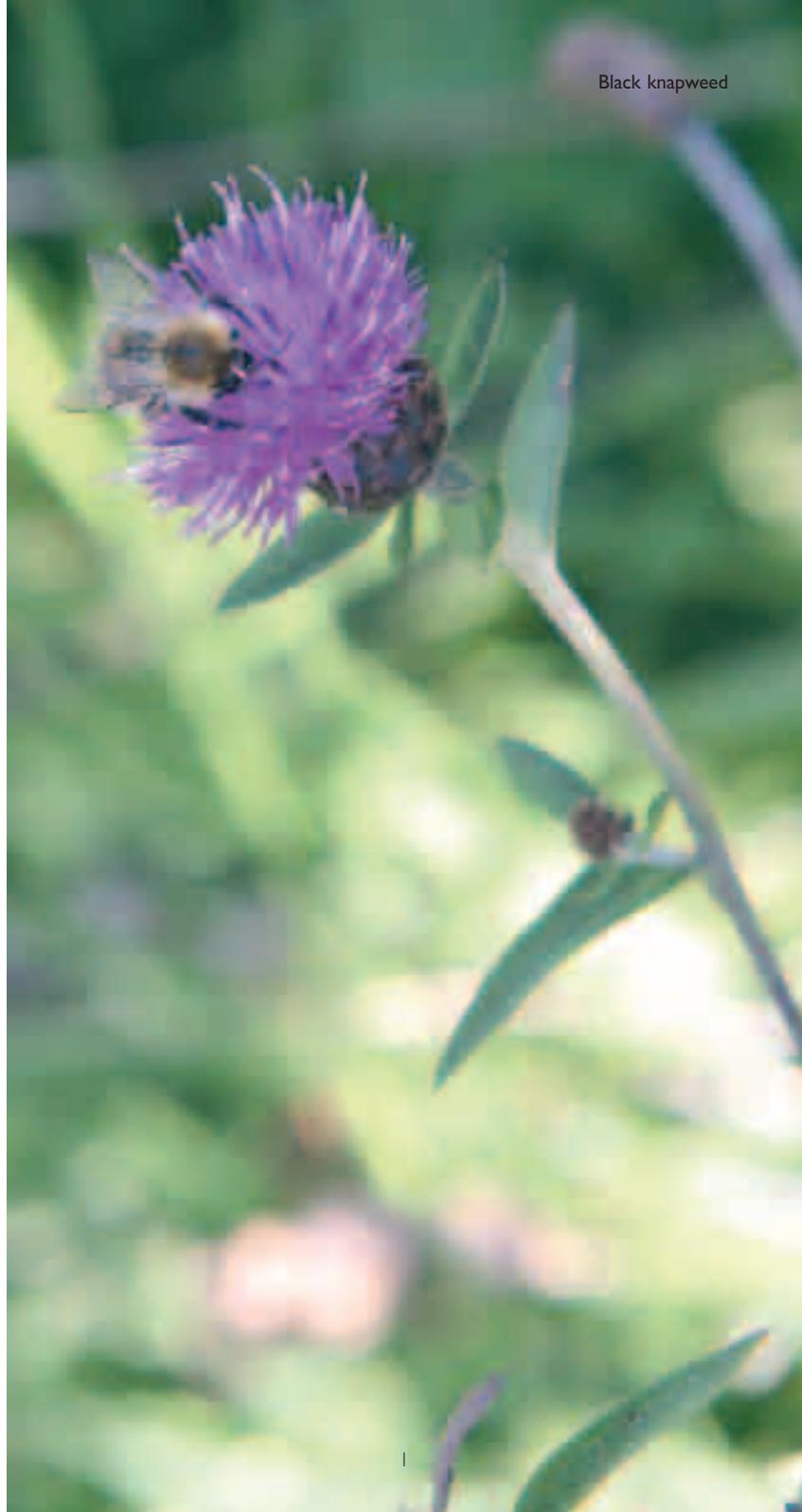
The purpose of these booklets is to raise awareness of the important wildlife and habitats found on and around Open Championship courses, and the commitment all of our venues have to good environmental practice. Royal Birkdale demonstrates these attributes in abundance with excellent programmes of scrub and tree removal to restore links habitat and well documented management that cares for the endangered sand lizard and natterjack toad. The fact that Royal Birkdale achieves this, and produces a course worthy of an Open Championship, demonstrates that golf and the environment can co-exist to the benefit of both.

The R&A is also committed to the environmental stewardship of golf courses. Careful planning for The Open ensures that the Championship causes minimal disturbance to the sensitive links habitat and the creatures it supports. Our Golf Course Committee promotes sustainable development and management of golf courses encompassing environmental and ecological issues. To learn more, visit our best practice website www.bestcourseforgolf.org

This booklet is the result of collaboration between ourselves, The Royal Birkdale Golf Club and The Sports Turf Research Institute. We are particularly grateful to The English Golf Union Ltd and Natural England who have both contributed financially to its production and I very much hope it enhances your visit to this year's Open Championship at Royal Birkdale.



PETER DAWSON
Chief Executive, The R&A



ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide has been produced for the 2008 Open: the 137th Open Championship and the ninth to be held at Royal Birkdale. It has been designed for the golfer and non-golfer alike, following the Birkdale links from 1st tee to 18th green to highlight the special plants and animals that can be found on and around the course.

It is hoped that the guide will help to raise awareness of the exceptional habitats and wildlife at Royal Birkdale and that the text and photographs will enhance your enjoyment of The Open.

The guide has been produced through the collaboration of the following organisations:

THE R&A

The R&A is golf's world rules and development body and organiser of The Open Championship. It operates with the consent of more than 130 national and international, amateur and professional organisations, from over 120 countries and on behalf of an estimated 30 million golfers in Europe, Africa, Asia-Pacific and The Americas (outside the USA and Mexico). The United States Golf Association (USGA) is the game's governing body in the United States and Mexico.

By developing The Open Championship as one of the world's great sporting events and an outstanding commercial success, The R&A is able to invest an annual surplus into grass roots development projects around the world. Particular emphasis is placed on the encouragement of junior golf, on the development of the game in emerging golfing nations, on coaching and the provision of open-to-all courses and practice facilities.

The R&A also provides best practice guidance on all aspects of golf course management, through its website bestcourseforgolf.org, helping to grow the game in a commercially and environmentally sustainable way.

10th Hole

THE SPORTS TURF RESEARCH INSTITUTE (STRI)

The STRI provides Europe's foremost independent consultancy devoted to turfgrass research, agronomy and golf-related ecological and environmental matters. STRI is a market leader, providing a national centre for consultancy and a recognised world centre for research. The STRI Ecology Service regularly advises The R&A on pre- and post-Open Championship environmental issues and works closely with statutory conservation and environmental organisations to help improve golf course management outside of the greens, fairways and tees.

THE ROYAL BIRKDALE GOLF CLUB

Golf was first played at Birkdale Golf Club on 5th October 1889 on a 9-hole facility situated a short distance to the east of the present course. In 1894, in order to expand, the Club moved to its current location at Birkdale Hills, and the newly constructed 18-hole facility opened in 1897.

A continuing desire to be a truly great course led to significant course revisions being made in the early 1930s following consultation with the highly respected golf course architecture company, Hawtree and J.H. Taylor Limited. On the back of these major changes came the decision to construct a new clubhouse to complement the quality and prestige of the course. This now iconic structure was completed in 1935 and was built to a radical design for its day.

The new and improved course continued to raise the profile of the Birkdale Golf Club, to the point where, in 1951, King George VI granted permission for the Club to be renamed The Royal Birkdale Golf Club. Since then, the Club has hosted eight Open Championships and two Ryder Cups. The Amateur Championship and the Weetabix Women's British Open Championships were held here in 2005 and this year, of course, sees the return of The Open.

THE ENGLISH GOLF UNION LTD (EGU)

The English Golf Union has served as the governing body of male amateur golf in England since its formation in 1924. From the National Golf Centre in Woodhall Spa, Lincolnshire, the EGU looks after the interests of its 1,900 affiliated golf clubs and their 740,000 members, making it one of the largest sports governing bodies in England.

In 2002 a partnership between the the EGU, The R&A and Natural England initiated the English Golf Environmental Advisory Scheme (EGEAS) to encourage golf clubs to consider making environmental improvements to courses and their greenkeeping practices. This successful initiative has now benefited over 250 golf clubs, including Royal Birkdale, with subsidised ecological and environmental advice.

The scheme offers golf clubs two advisory visits from the STRI Ecology Team: the first to set a number of realistic targets and the second to assess the resulting benefits for both wildlife enhancement and the golf course. On satisfactory project completion, the club is awarded a certificate of achievement.

Much publicity has been made of the English Golf Environmental Advisory Scheme in local, regional and national media, including British Wildlife and BBC Wildlife publications.

NATURAL ENGLAND (NE)

Golf courses play a vital role in the protection and enhancement of the natural environment in England, particularly at the coast on links land where natural areas have been protected from development by virtue of golf courses. These places are special because of golf, not despite it.

Natural England works in partnership with the English Golf Union to look at how we can better manage these areas around England to help wildlife thrive.

One in every 20 golf courses in England is nationally important for wildlife and designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Thus, over 6,000 hectares of SSSI land are on golf courses and 81% of this area is in good condition. Sand dunes and lowland heath are two threatened habitats that particularly benefit. Royal Birkdale itself, which forms part of a SSSI, is home to marsh orchids and helleborines that live in its sand dunes.

CONSERVATION STATUS OF THE SEFTON COAST AND THE ROYAL BIRKDALE GOLF CLUB

Royal Birkdale is one of the most ecologically sensitive courses that hosts The Open and, along with the surrounding estuaries, mud flats, sand flats and sand dunes, is recognised under local, national and international designations for its outstanding nature conservation value.

Royal Birkdale lies within the Sefton Coast Special Area of Conservation (SAC). This was designated largely for its vast expanse of diverse sand dune systems which, at over 2,000 hectares, is the largest dune complex in the UK. Royal Birkdale encompasses approximately 100 hectares of these dunes and, with 80% of the golf course left to nature, the course blends in beautifully with its surroundings.

The Sefton Coast SAC stretches from Southport (just north of Royal Birkdale), south along nearly 15 miles of coastline to the town of Crosby, encompassing a total area of over 4,500 hectares. The area is also designated on the Ramsar list of Wetlands of International Importance, as a Special Protection Area (SPA) under the European Wild Birds Directive, and as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) at national level.

These designations are in place to protect the 'mobile' and 'fixed' or 'grey' sand dunes and also the 'Atlantic Decalcified' dunes that are known to support the only population in northwest England of petalwort and the only known population in England of Baltic rush. As well as these plants, the area is a hugely popular site for overwintering wading birds and is home to several other rarities such as natterjack toads, great crested newt, sand lizard and marsh helleborine orchid.

The Club, acknowledging the responsibility they have to maintain their habitats in a favourable condition, has developed close working relationships with Natural England, the Environment Agency, the Sefton Woodland Owners Task Group, Sefton Land Managers and the British Trust for Nature Conservation Volunteers. This should ensure that Royal Birkdale continues to be renowned for its conservation efforts, toward which Chris Whittle, Royal Birkdale's Course Manager, has made a considerable contribution in his 14 years at the Club, and for recognising just how the environment contributes to the superb round of golf it has to offer.

3rd Hole

HABITAT ENHANCEMENT

Sand dunes are a harsh environment for plants, with shifting sands, strong winds and few nutrients. The sandy soil is also generally well drained and water can be scarce. The characteristic undulating topography of the dunes, however, creates a variation in water availability. The tall dune peaks drain to the 'slacks' in between and these can support wet conditions. In many areas at Royal Birkdale the natural slacks have been enhanced through excavation, which brings them below the water table. The sand from the excavations is reused on the course, to create mounds and remodel bunkers. This provides a local source of sand, negating the need for long distance deliveries of a dwindling resource, ensuring that new mounds support vegetation that is characteristic of the site without the risk of introducing nutrients and seeds from outside of the course.

The dune slacks support northern marsh orchid, southern marsh orchid, marsh helleborine, marsh pennywort, yellow rattle, black knapweed, lady's smock and, occasionally, where peat has formed, bog cotton. Northern and southern marsh orchids thrive in damp wetland areas but are not often found sharing the same space. As their names suggest, one is dominant in the north of Britain and the other is dominant in the south. Royal Birkdale lies at the edge of the ranges of both and thus the two can be seen on the course. They can be distinguished by their height and colour: northern marsh orchid is shorter and is a redder purple than its southern neighbour, but they can hybridise to produce varieties with characteristics of both parent orchids. Marsh helleborine has less closely packed flowers which are crimson and white, with a yellow centre.

Smaller wetland 'scrapes' have also been created throughout the dunes, which support natterjack toads. These have been created in series to form inland 'stepping stones' for the natterjacks, facilitating their movement across the dune system.

Work has also been carried out in the drier areas of the course to remove trees and scrub and to restore open grassland. In particular the club has had great success in controlling white poplar, also known as the 'Lancashire weed' which can tolerate salt laden winds and will grow in the dunes where many other tall trees will not. These trees can become quite troublesome as they need a lot of moisture and can compete with turf for water. White poplar will also sucker from the roots and can outcompete native flora.

Royal Birkdale took the decision to remove white poplar from the course for both golfing and nature conservation reasons through the removal of mature trees and the continual treatment of regrowth.

Bog Cotton



New slack left of 3rd



COURSE MANAGEMENT AND
WILDLIFE CONSERVATION AT

The Royal Birkdale Golf Club

A
Hole by Hole
Guide

HOLES 1, 2 AND 3

The layout of the 1st hole has left plenty of unmanaged rough to the right of the fairway which supports a diverse and colourful mix of wildflowers, including dog rose, comfrey, sneezewort, white dead nettle, restharrow, common toadflax, biting stoncrop, common centaury and sea radish. White dead nettle, also called white archangel, has leaves similar in appearance to common nettle, but has small white flowers tucked beneath their leaves which lack stinging hairs. Dog rose also grows between the 1st and 2nd hole and some of these support Robin's pincushion gall – a bright red spiky mass on the stem caused by a tiny wasp, *Diplolepis rosae*. The wasp larvae are protected by the gall and feed on the dog rose in winter before emerging as adults in spring.

Rosebay willowherb, which flowers as a tall sea of pink in summer, proliferates to the right of the tees on the 2nd hole. This plant is the main food source of the elephant hawk moth. Further out, the pink of the willowherb is contrasted by the uplifting yellow blooms of common evening primrose, a native of North America, and the more subtle yellow flowers of kidney vetch. A crab apple tree can be found at the perimeter of the course, this is thick with pink blossom in spring and laden with apples in autumn. These can be eaten but are very bitter to taste.

A dune slack has been created between the 3rd and 6th holes which supports northern and southern marsh orchid, marsh helleborine, yellow rattle and common fleabane. The shallow pool in the centre of the slack attracts dragonflies such as the ruddy darter. Mature male ruddy darters are bright crimson while immature males and females are pale ochre in colour. Both can be distinguished by their characteristic bouncing, swinging flight. Grey herons have also been spotted stalking slowly around the perimeter of this pool.



Grey heron

Robin's pincushion gall



Common centaury



Marsh helleborine



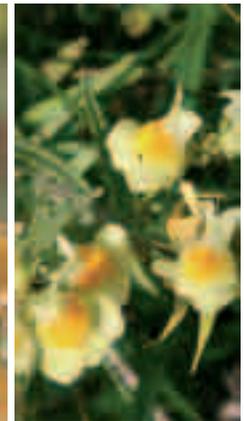
White dead nettle



Common fleabane



Common toadflax



Female ruddy darter





NATTERJACK TOADS

Natterjack toads are rare animals protected by both national and European legislation. The UK is at the edge of the natterjacks European range. Their numbers have always been restricted but they have suffered dramatic decline throughout the 20th century due to the loss of open heathland and the scrubbing over of their coastal habitat.

Natterjack toads are unlikely to be seen as they are largely nocturnal and are well camouflaged, even able to darken or lighten the colour of their skin to blend in with the surrounding vegetation. They have flattened bodies and short limbs, adapted for digging, and have pale brown, olive and grey bodies and red brown or green warts. Natterjacks are most easily distinguished by the vivid yellow flash that runs from head to tail.

Natterjack toads are pioneer species and breed in shallow pools with little vegetation where competition from other toads and frogs will be less and where the tadpoles are less likely to be preyed upon by newts. Natterjack toad spawn is laid in long strings, with as many as 4,000 eggs laid by each female toad. Natterjack tadpoles are the smallest of European tadpoles and are easily preyed upon.

Natterjacks feed mostly on moths which they catch on bare sand or the tight mown grass of the fairways by running on their short legs like a lizard. Unlike frogs or the common toad, natterjacks rarely jump. The adults are also poor swimmers and can drown in deep water if there is no way of escape. The short legs of the natterjack allow them to dig shallow burrows, which they retreat to during the day time and during winter when they hibernate.

The R&A has developed a natterjack toad method statement for the preparation and running of The Open Championship to ensure that no natterjacks are harmed. All contractors are required to adapt their working practices to take account of the natterjacks and the greenkeepers have been trained to handle the toads and can move them out of the way of danger.



Natterjack tadpoles



HOLES 4, 5 AND 6

The 4th hole is a short par 3, which plays towards the wooded periphery of the course. A contorted hawthorn tree, which blooms white in the spring and attracts bees and butterflies such as the speckled wood, stands prominently to the back of this green. Hedge bindweed, resplendent with trumpet-shaped white flowers, winds a torturous path through the connected trees which make up the hedge that lines the path between the 4th and 5th holes.

The large pond on the 5th hole supports an attractive mix of native aquatic vegetation, including branched bur-reed around the pond edge, floating white water lily and spikes of mareetail which rise up from beneath the surface. Southern hawkler dragonflies can be seen resting by the pond but can also be spotted high above the pine trees to the left of this hole, trying to attract a mate. Southern hawklers are much larger and more conspicuous than the small ruddy darter found on the 3rd hole: male southern hawklers have vibrant blue, green and black markings, while the female is stouter with more subtle green,

black and yellow markings. The male southern hawkler also has a distinctive flight, circling around following a regular path, and they will deliberately fly close to human observers.

The 6th hole plays along the seaward edge of the course and its rough grassland, dominated by marram, reflect this. The grasslands on the Birkdale links support ground nesting birds such as skylark and meadow pipit. These birds require open habitat and will not nest close to trees or shrubs as these would provide vantage points for predatory birds. Efforts are made to control scrub invasion to provide suitable nesting grounds for such rare birds. Pheasants can also be spotted across the dunes on the course. The pine plantations which run alongside the 5th and 6th holes and the few isolated trees across the course aid the movement of red squirrels along the Sefton Coast. Red squirrels are becoming increasingly rare in the UK and this small section of coast is one of the few places in England that still supports them.



RED SQUIRRELS

Red squirrels are our only native squirrel and are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981. The red squirrel is smaller and less bold than the introduced grey squirrel and generally has an all over red coat, rather than the red backs and feet of the greys. Reds can also be distinguished by the short tufts above their ears. They are very shy and spend much of their time high in the trees. Their presence can be confirmed by the chewed pine cones which they let fall to the ground and by the large dreys, or nests, which they build in the forks of trees. You may even be lucky enough to hear a distinctive 'chuk-chuk' noise if one is close by.

The population and distribution of red squirrels has declined dramatically across all areas of the UK, due mainly to habitat loss, the competitive ability of the grey squirrels and the introduction of disease by greys. There are thought to be only 140,000 red squirrels left in Britain, compared to 2.5 million greys. The Sefton Coast is one of the last few refuges for red squirrels in England. Though red squirrels do not breed on the Birkdale links the few pine trees on the course provide food and shelter for reds which venture across from neighbouring pine plantations. Red squirrels will also eat fungi, fruit and berries.

Common field grasshopper



8th Hole

HOLES 7, 8 AND 9

The 7th hole is a par 3 which plays across a gently undulating grassland carry to a heavily defended green. The characteristic grating sound of the common field grasshopper can be heard here, and across the grasslands at Royal Birkdale, and they can often be seen sunning themselves on bare patches of ground. This large grasshopper varies in colour and individuals may be green, brown or purple and can be mottled with black, brown or grey. Mature adults have an orange tip on their abdomen and this helps distinguish them from other grasshoppers. Unlike other grasshoppers, this species is a strong flier.

The 8th tees are on the seaward edge of the course and this hole features a strong marram carry, which indicates the proximity of the sea. As you follow this long par 4 inland, however, the character of the grassland changes. The dunes at Royal Birkdale are gradually building out towards the sea, with new dunes forming at the high tide line and the dunes behind becoming progressively older and more stable. With increasing distance inland, the dunes undergo a transition from mobile, or 'yellow', dunes through to fixed, or 'grey', dunes. The grass species change along this gradient, reflecting the changing stability of their habitat: mobile dunes are characterised by marram grass, which can tolerate the shifting sand, while fixed dunes support less marram, more fescue, and wildflowers such as harebell and ladies' bedstraw and scrub vegetation such as gorse and creeping willow.

The 9th hole plays further inland, with distant views of the clubhouse, and the grassland is peppered with patches of creeping willow and gorse scrub. Patches of creeping willow are recognised as European Priority Habitat, and such areas receive protection under the EU Habitats Directive. Creeping willow has silvery grey foliage and a low growth habit, rarely exceeding one metre in height, and is usually found in hollows, both wet and dry. Patches of common polypody, a small, wide toothed fern, are also dotted about the grasslands on the 9th where they grow outwards from steep north facing slopes.

HOLES 10, 11 AND 12

Asparagus, a rare garden escape, can be found in the rough on the 10th hole. This vegetable has small greenish white, bell-shaped flowers, scale-like leaves on the stem and a branched upper structure.

Asparagus plants are either male or female and both plants must be grown close together if seed is to be produced. Its young shoots, or spears, are edible and can be collected and eaten from mid-April to early June. Male plants produce more spears than female plants.

The 11th hole supports trailing patches of dewberry. This plant has similar leaves and large dark segmented berries similar to blackberries, but grows much closer to the ground and has smaller and fewer spines. The fruit itself can be distinguished by a bluish waxy bloom and is edible but dull to taste and no match for a blackberry. In other areas, the soft hairy blooms of haresfoot clover add a dusting of pink to the dune grassland, and bright yellow bird's-foot trefoil adds splashes of audacious colour.

The 12th hole plays out over a magnificent dune slack carry which supports southern and northern marsh orchids. The white heads of bog cotton can be seen dancing in the wind, like stray cotton or lamb's wool. The 12th plays parallel to the sea and the vegetation in the slack also shows this influence, e.g. sea club rush, a tall pale green, flat-leaved rush, with dark hairy seed heads, that favours brackish water. Seabirds such as black headed gulls and oystercatchers can often be spotted feeding on worms in the close mown grass of the Birkdale fairways.



Asparagus



Sea club rush

12th Hole

HOLES 13, 14 AND 15

The 13th hole offers an expanse of rough grassland, which is shaped round and between the tees and hugs the fairway bunkers to the left and right. The bright purple and yellow flowers of bittersweet can be spotted on velvety stems in summer in areas in the rough to the right of this hole. In autumn, the plant bears small egg-shaped berries which change colour from green to yellow to red.

A hollow to the right of the 14th hole hides the large magenta pink flowers of the broad-leaved everlasting pea. This is a moisture hungry plant, which may explain its hidden location in a deep wet hollow. Unlike other members of the pea family, its large showy flowers are unscented. Ladies' bedstraw can also be seen dotted through the rough. This is a delicate yellow flowered plant which smells of new mown hay and was used in the past for stuffing pillows and mattresses.

The open grassland on the 15th supports many butterflies, including the small heath, meadow brown, wall brown, grayling and the dark green fritillary, which despite its name has wings patterned with orange and black with white spots on the underside. These are all attracted to the wildflowers of the stable dune grassland, including the delicate nodding heads of harebell which grow in small groups and add a gentle blue hue to the grassland.



Bittersweet



Broad-leaved everlasting pea

13th Hole

HOLE 16, 17 AND 18

The wet slack to the right of the 16th tee was excavated to provide material to create new mounds around the tees and, though newly established, it has the potential to replicate the diverse vegetation and invertebrates found in the mature dune slack pond on the 3rd hole. The wide and shallow nature of the wet slack also means that it could prove a suitable breeding site for natterjack toads in the future.

There is a significant scrub component on the 17th hole, including large patches of mature common gorse. Gorse is a spiky dark green evergreen shrub with bold yellow flowers which may appear at almost any time of the year, though mostly from July to September when the air can be heavy with their coconut scent. Its dense year-round growth provides protective cover for birds, mammals and reptiles, including sand lizards, and the flowers are an important source of pollen and nectar for insects, particularly in the winter when other food sources are scarce. However, gorse is a highly competitive species which can actively change the pH and nutrient status of surrounding soil to better suit its growth, and must be managed to maintain a balanced mosaic of duneland habitat.

The 18th hole plays back towards the Art Deco style clubhouse which affords wonderful views of the course. The large area of grassland to the right of the 18th supports creeping willow and attractive grasses such as sweet vernal grass. Sea buckthorn is found further up the fairway to the left. This thorny shrub has silvery stems and leaves and orange berries. Its small flowers are pale green and appear before the leaves. Sea buckthorn can form large impenetrable thickets, to the detriment of locally native flora, and must be managed. The orange berries provide a valuable source of food for small songbirds in winter, including willow warbler and linnet.

18th hole



Sea buckthorn

SAND LIZARDS

Sand lizards are protected under both national and European legislation and it is illegal to deliberately disturb, capture, injure or kill a sand lizard and it is illegal to damage or destroy their breeding sites or resting places. This means that the greenstaff at Royal Birkdale have to be watchful of sand lizards and must adapt the methods and the timing of their operations to best avoid them. During The Open, even operations as simple as changing the hole location requires a quick check to see if a sand lizard has snuck into the cup.

Sand lizards are difficult to spot as they are well camouflaged within the duneland vegetation and spend a lot of time underground either in burrows dug by the lizard or in vacant mammal burrows, where they often form small colonies and where they hibernate in winter. Eggs are also laid underground in soft open sand that is warmed by the sun. They are most easily seen when basking in open sand on sunny, south facing banks and paths. Like all lizards, they are cold blooded and must regulate their temperature by alternatively seeking sun and shade and, as such, need both open sand for sun bathing and tall vegetation for shade. At Royal Birkdale, sand lizards are most often seen on the holes to the south of the course which adjoin the Birkdale Corridor Local Nature Reserve.

Sand lizards are generally 18 to 20 cm in length and are stocky with blunt snouts, short heads and short legs. Female sand lizards are longer than the males and coloured pale grey or light brown beneath a dark black patterning, with a creamy white underside. The male sand lizard also has a slightly darker central stripe of patterning on its back and has green sides, which are particularly vibrant during the breeding season, and a pale green belly.

If sand lizards are confronted by a predator and feel in danger they can shed their tails. The tail continues to move for a few minutes after being detached to attract the attention of the predator while the lizard makes its escape. The sand lizard will gradually grow a new tail, but this may be shorter than the original.



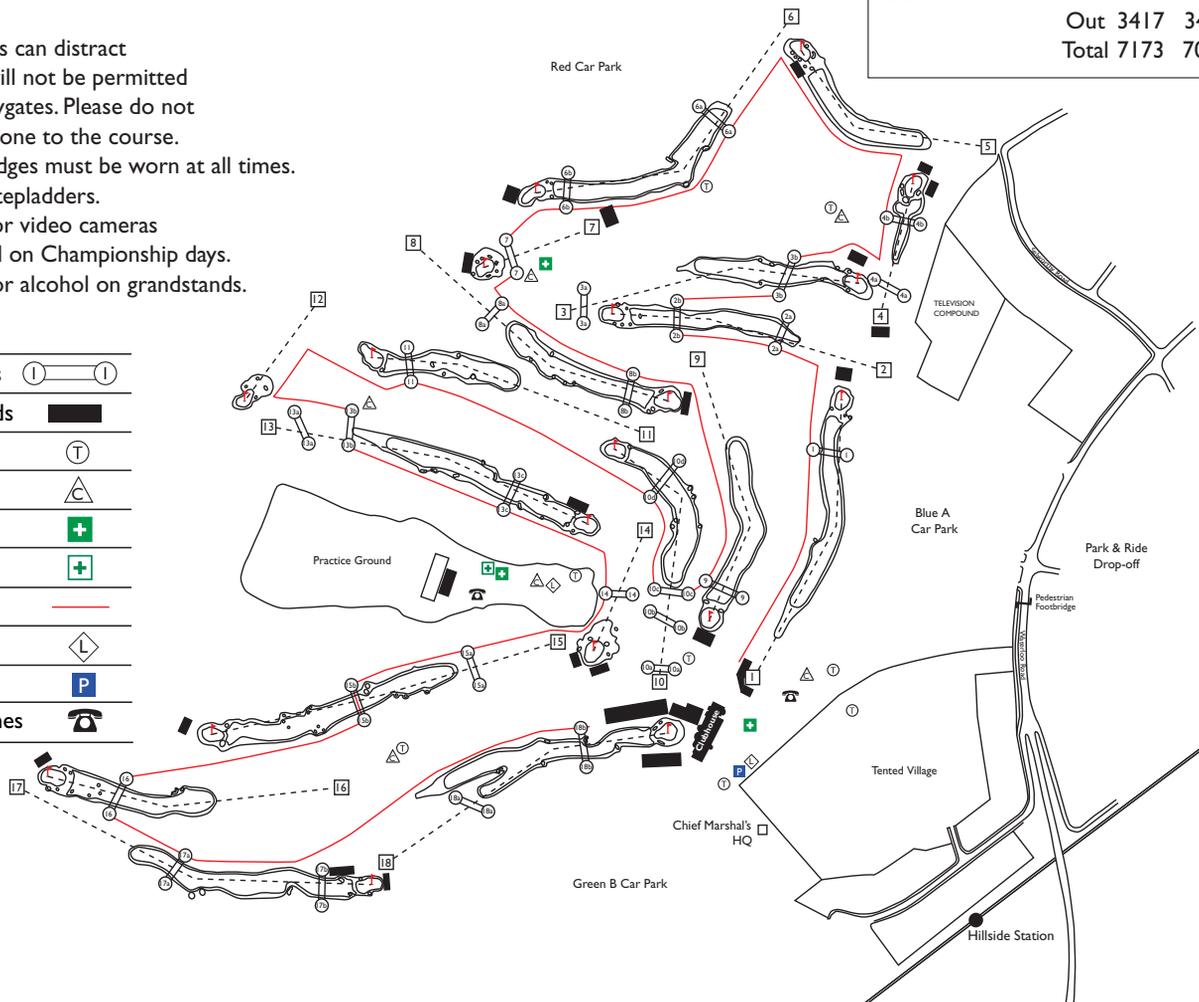
THE RED ROUTE

The 'Red Route' is for the benefit of spectators who may wish to follow a particular Game.

- Mobile phones can distract players and will not be permitted within the paygates. Please do not bring your phone to the course.
- Admission badges must be worn at all times.
- No dogs or stepladders.
- No cameras or video cameras are permitted on Championship days.
- No smoking or alcohol on grandstands.

KEY

Crossing Points	
Spectator Stands	
Toilets	
Catering	
Medical Centre	
Pharmacy	
Red Route	
Left Luggage	
Police	
Public Telephones	



Card of the Course ROYAL BIRKDALE

Hole	Yards	Par	Hole	Yards	Par
1	450	4	10	408	4
2	421	4	11	436	4
3	451	4	12	184	3
4	201	3	13	499	4
5	346	4	14	201	3
6	499	4	15	544	5
7	178	3	16	439	4
8	457	4	17	572	5
9	414	4	18	473	4
Out	3417	34	In	3756	34
		Total		7173	70

USEFUL CONTACTS AND ORGANISATIONS

THE R&A

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Tel: 01334 460000 www.randa.org

THE ROYAL BIRKDALE GOLF CLUB

Waterloo Road, Southport, PR8 2LX
Tel: 01704 552020 www.royalbirkdale.com

THE ENGLISH GOLF UNION LTD

The National Golf Centre, Woodhall Spa, Lincolnshire, LN10 6PU
Tel: 01526 354500 www.englishgolfunion.org

NATURAL ENGLAND

North West Region, Pier House, Wallgate, Wigan, WN3 4AL
Tel: 01942 820342 www.naturalengland.org.uk

THE ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

National Customer Contact Centre, PO Box 544, Rotherham, S60 1BY
Tel: 08708 506506 www.environment-agency.gov.uk

SEFTON COUNCIL

Planning, Magdalen House, 30 Trinity Road, Bootle, Merseyside, L20 3NJ
Tel: 0151 934 3558 www.sefton.gov.uk

THE SPORTS TURF RESEARCH INSTITUTE

St Ives Estate, Bingley, West Yorkshire, BD16 1AU
Tel: 01274 565131 www.stri.co.uk

ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF BIRDS

The Lodge, Potton Road, Sandy, Bedfordshire, SG19 2DL
Tel: 01767 680551 www.rspb.org.uk

THE HERPETOLOGICAL CONSERVATION TRUST

665A Christchurch Road, Boscombe, Bournemouth, Dorset, BH1 4AP
Tel: 01202 391319 www.herpconstrust.org.uk

OPEN CHAMPIONS AT ROYAL BIRKDALE

Peter Thomson – 1954

Arnold Palmer – 1961

Peter Thomson – 1965

Lee Trevino – 1971

Johnny Miller – 1976

Tom Watson – 1983

Ian Baker-Finch – 1991

Mark O'Meara – 1998

Peter Thomson

Peter Thomson became synonymous with Royal Birkdale, winning the first and last of his five titles there, and at the age of 41 tied for 9th behind Lee Trevino in 1971 in one of his last bids to match Harry Vardon's record of six Open wins.

In 1954, Royal Birkdale hosted The Open for the first time, the War having prevented them from first doing so in 1940. In the final round, Thomson needed a five at the 18th to win. Bobby Locke provided a heart-stopping moment, striding down the 18th fairway, needing three to tie. He missed from 12 yards, Thomson got his bogey and was the Open Champion for the first time.

Thomson won again in 1955 and 1956 for a memorable hat-trick, and added his fifth and final victory in 1965, in what was the last of the three-day Championships. There was probably never such a log-jam as there was on that Friday afternoon when they lined up for the last round. Thomson headed the field on 214, but thirteen players all had the chance to win. Thomson won it with his second shot to the 510 yard 17th which hit the flag at a time when he was just a stroke ahead.



Lee Trevino

In 1971, having won the US Open for the second time, Trevino arrived at Royal Birkdale for the 100th Open Championship with the golf world wondering if he could take two majors in the space of four weeks with victory at Birkdale.

Trevino jointly lead with Tony Jacklin for two rounds, then went a shot in front of Jacklin and Mr. Lu (Lu Liang-Huan from Taiwan) with a round to go. With five 3s from the 3rd to the 7th, and out in 31, Trevino was coasting home until Birkdale exacted its revenge at the 17th. There he drove into the sandhills, took two more to get back on to the fairway, and down went an ugly seven. Lu's five cut the deficit to one shot.

At the 18th Mr. Lu pulled his drive into the crowd. Trevino duly won by a shot to join immortals such as Jones, Sarazen and Hogan who had won the US and Open Championships in the same year. He was to retain his title at Muirfield 12 months later.





The Open Championship
FUTURE VENUES

Turnberry

16-19 July 2009

St Andrews

15-18 July 2010

Royal St George's

14-17 July 2011

Royal Lytham & St Annes

19-22 July 2012

