

## FACTS

# GOLF HOLIDAYS



## ROYAL CINQUE PORTS

### DEAL, KENT

Julius Caesar first led his conquering armies across the English Channel over 2000 years ago; St Augustine came to bring Christianity to Britain 1500 years ago; the ancient Cinque Ports date back 1000 years; and Henry VIII's castles at Deal and Walmer a mere 400 years or so. All of this virtually on the ground where Royal Cinque Ports Golf Club stands today. The history of Kent, the oldest county in the British Isles, is fascinating and is bound up with the history of a great Golf Club, scene of the Open Championship on two occasions, patronised and regularly played by royalty; trodden by the greats - Vardon, Taylor, Ray and Braid before the first war; Duncan, Mitchell and Hagen between the wars; and by Locke, Nicklaus and Garcia in more recent times.

The Deal course is traditionally laid out on a narrow stretch of land extending to Sandwich Bay, and the natural links terrain has been subtly used to provide a wide variety of challenges. On almost every hole there is an abundance of large sand dunes which establishes the undulating character of the course and makes it unique. The fairways are just as undulating and it is seldom that a completely flat stance can be obtained other than on the tees. As with all traditional seaside links, the wind is a major factor which has to be taken into account when deciding on club and shot selection.

The 74 bunkers are large but fair and easily seen from the tees and fairways, and are in the most part steep and revetted. On the first and last holes there are water ditches which come into play for the approach shot. As the course runs outward parallel to the pebble beach, this can present quite a problem - as the sea wall and beach are integral parts of the course. The rough is covered in coarse marram grass which is especially punitive between May and August. Once the greens have been reached, you will putt on some of the largest, finest and fastest greens in England.

The original Clubhouse was built around 1892 following the birth of the Club. It takes no more than a casual glance to trace the subsequent extensions that have been necessary to follow the Club's development and today it is a building in which the atmosphere is friendly and relaxed. The 19th is worth a visit on its own. Traditional Clubhouse dress has been sensibly relaxed in recent years. At breakfast there are no restrictions apart from what is understood to be smart casual. Beyond this, the informal lounge and bar remain smart casual throughout the day on all days except Sunday.



In 2002 the Club was honoured to receive both 47th place in the 'Golf World Top 100 Courses' and to be included in the 'Top 10 Favourite Courses' in the Independent National Newspaper.

The great Bernard Darwin wrote of 'a truly great course, most testing and severe of all championship courses' of 'skylarks' and 'white cliffs above Pegwell Bay and shipping viewed through the long plate glass windows'.