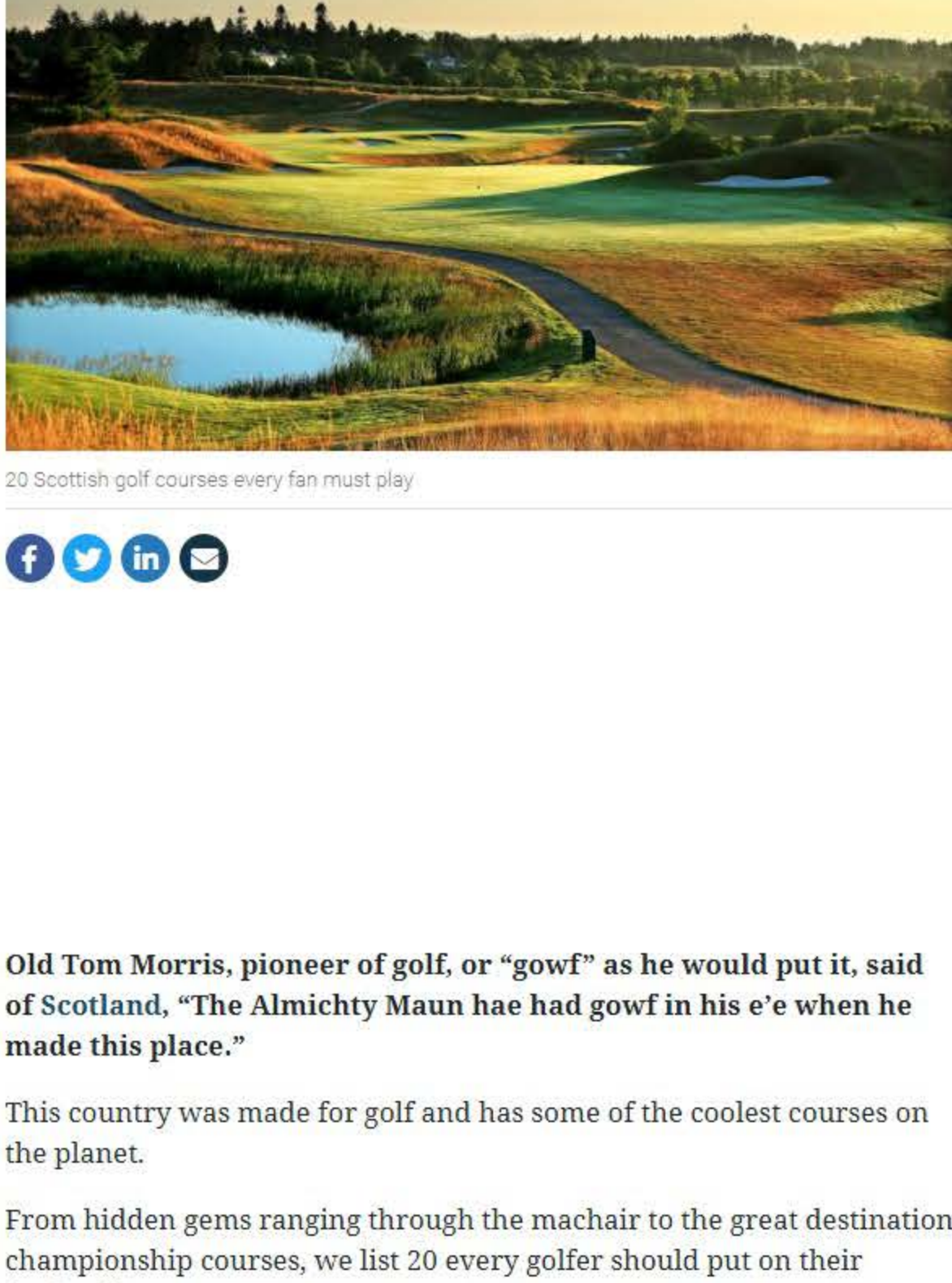
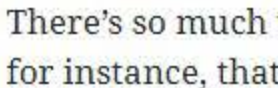


The Cool List: 20 Scottish golf courses every fan must play

THE COOL LIST



20 Scottish golf courses every fan must play



Old Tom Morris, pioneer of golf, or “gowf” as he would put it, said of Scotland, “The Almichty Maun hae had gowf in his e’e when he made this place.”

This country was made for golf and has some of the coolest courses on the planet.

From hidden gems ranging through the machair to the great destination championship courses, we list 20 every golfer should put on their bucket list.

Royal Troon Golf Club Old Course

There's so much to lure the golfer here, not least it's history: the fact, for instance, that it was the stage for one of golf's ultimate duels, between Henrik Stenson and Phil Mickelson in a head-to-head that Jack Nicklaus has said even trumped his duel in the sun.

What began as a six-holer in the 1870s, dreamt up in a pub by golf enthusiasts, was expanded over the 1880s.

It also features one of the world's most well-known holes and the shortest in Open Championship, “Postage Stamp” 8th, with its tiny green, surrounded by bunkers.

It's a little hole that, as Troon local, Colin Montgomerie has put it, “you've got to treat with an awful lot of respect”.

Golf Monthly says, “Depending on the strength and direction of the wind, the Old Course can be a serious challenge.”

Green fees: £250

Machrihanish Dunes

Machrihanish Dunes is the new kid on the sands, opened in 2009 on a stretch of coast that has hosted the nearby Machrihanish course since 1879.

Gently, with the lightest touch possible, it has been created in a Site Of Scientific Interest and home to five different types of orchid.

Its designer David McLay Kidd described it as a returning of golf to how it should be played: “No longer is it a gentle walk in a garden, it will be a full-fledged mountaineering expedition.”

As a result, with five tees at the ocean's edge and grass mostly mown by sheep not machines, it feels like playing in nature.

Plus, there's the comfort of the revamped Ugdale hotel to stay in after your adventure in the wild.

Green fees - £75 per round

Castle Stuart

On the edge of the Moray Firth, overlooking the Black Isle, sits one of Scotland's most dramatic courses, with views out over Kessock Bridge, Chanonry Lighthouse, Fort George, and Castle Stuart.



But its pleasures don't just lie in the course itself – and its infinity greens, natural bunkers and sea cliffs.

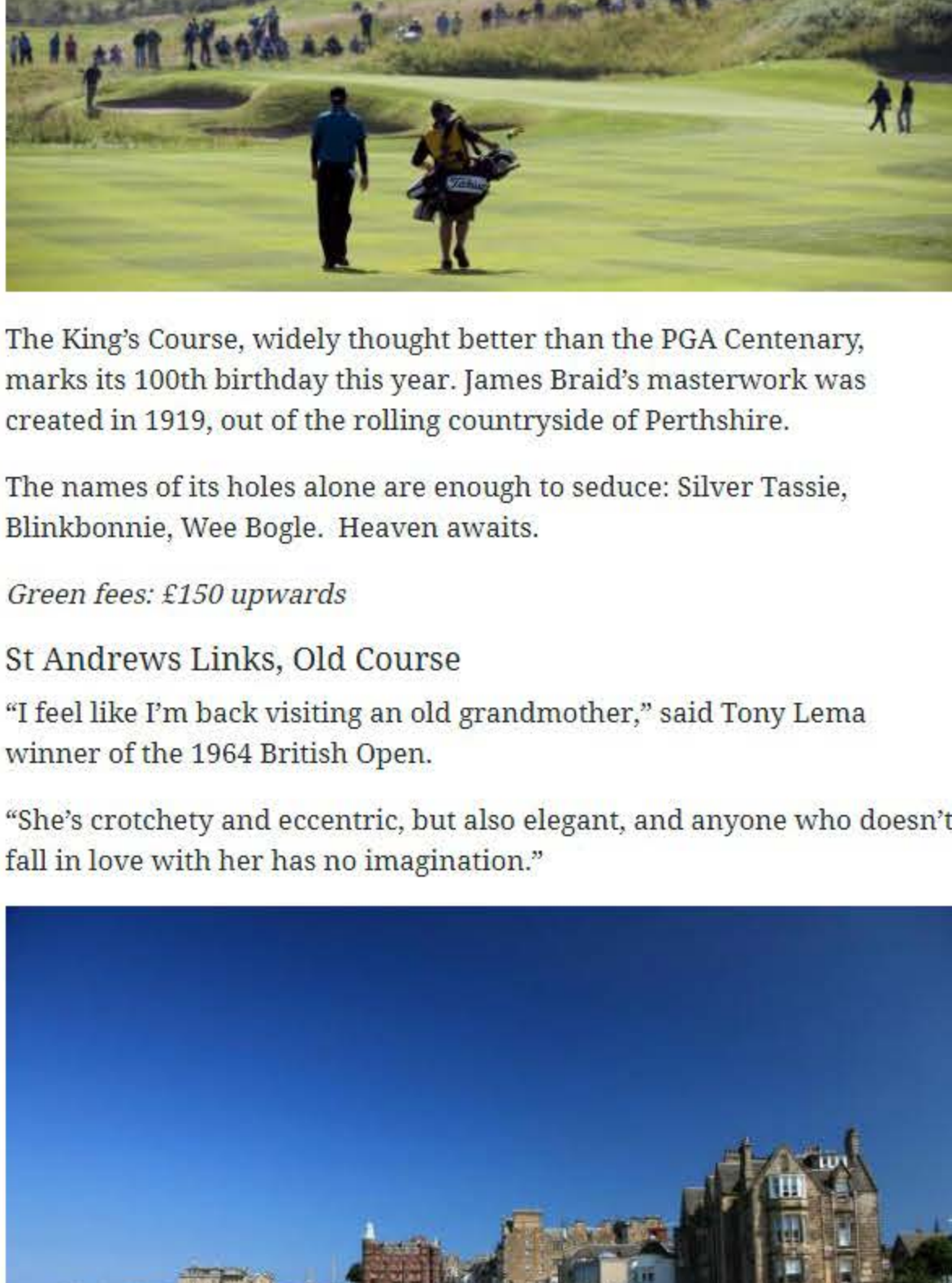
There's also the Art-Deco style clubhouse, a stylish 1930-style drum of a building offering panoramic views and giving a nod to a golf golden era.

Tom Coyne, an American writer who has played most of Scotland's golf courses, said it “feigned punishments but offered playability”.

Green Fees - £210 per round

Cruden Bay

The stunning vista at the 9th hole, the highest point on this Championship Course, boasts views of Slains Castle ruins and has been voted the best view in Scottish golfing.



VisitScotland

Originally an Old Tom Morris course, dating back to 1899, Cruden Bay comes with plenty of history.

Winston Churchill played golf there alongside Herbert Asquith.

In summer 1914 it was host to one of the most famous games in golfing history, an epic semi-final between Harry Vardon and Ted Ray.

Green fees: £150 per round, weekend

Brora

The cult of Brora is one that keeps growing.

There's a wild, authentic feel to the course, one of Scotland's most northerly mainland golfing destinations.

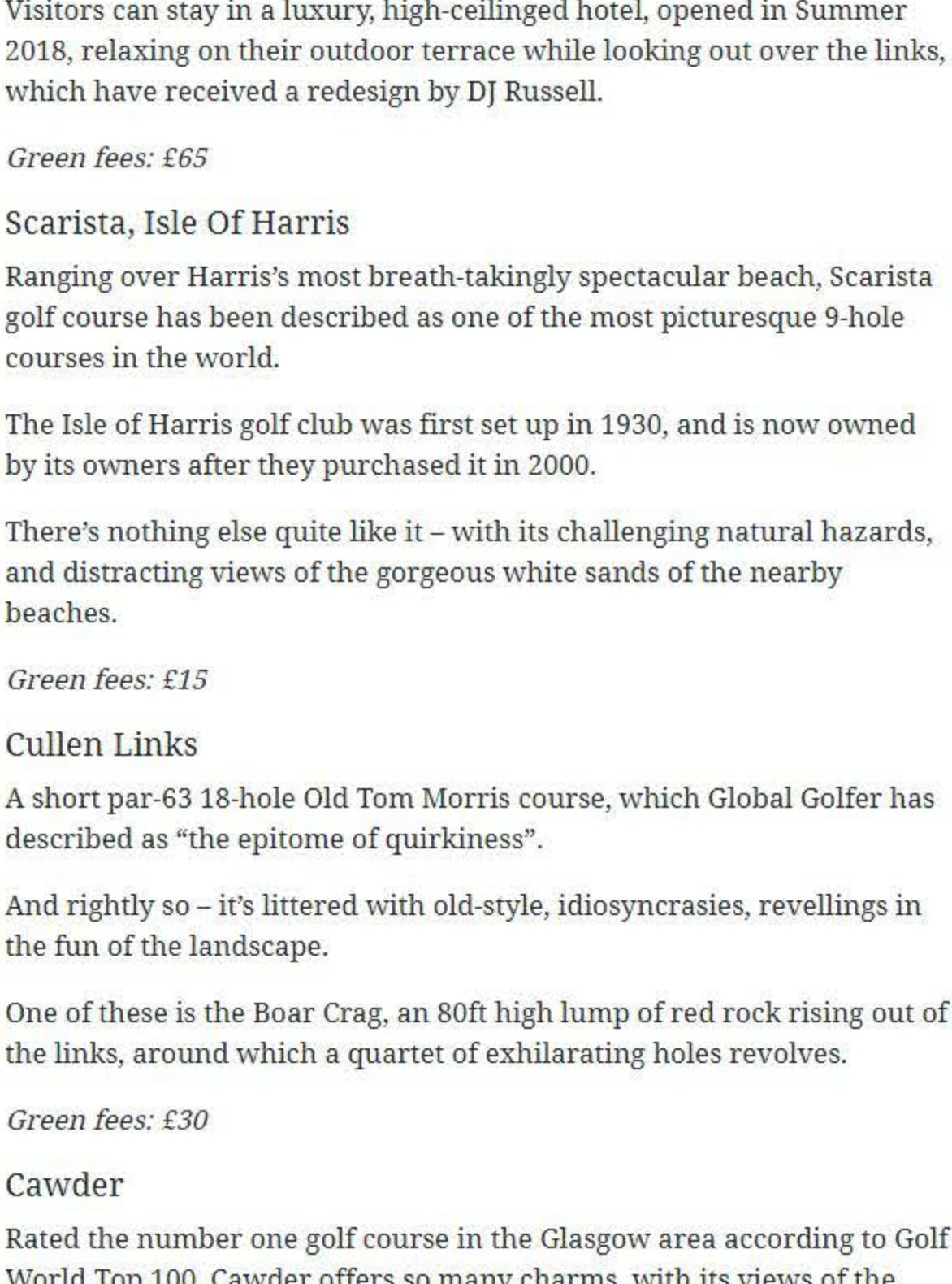
Herds of cows frequently stray across the green. Dunes undulate. Sea spray mists the ninth, which is also called the Sea Hole.

Built in 1924 by James Braid, it's one of the “Magnificent Seven” of golf clubs that form the designer's Highland Golf Trail.

Green fees: £80 per round

Ailsa, Trump Turnberry

Some of golf's most iconic moments have happened at the Ailsa – not least the duel in the sun, in which Tom Watson and Jack Nicklaus battled it out in the summer of 1977.



This blue-skied drama happened at the first Open ever to be held at Turnberry, which has now hosted four. Here, you can have your own try at the hole now named “Duel In The Sun”.

The views, of course, are breathtaking – Arran and Ailsa Craig in the backdrop.

Its fees will put a serious dent in your pocket, but then it is the number one ranked golf course in UK & Ireland, by Golf Monthly, and one of the best in the world.

Green fees: £375 for non-hotel resident

Mar Hall

Set in 240 acres of gorgeous woodland estate, but also just a short drive from Glasgow, the 18-hole Earl of Mar Championship golf course is sculpted out of grounds in the estate of Mar Hall, edged with chestnut and beech trees, boasting views over the River Clyde and Kilpatrick Hills.

Here, golf is also all about the luxury – with spa and fine-dining on offer at the Edward mansion hotel of Mar Hall.

Green fees: £60

Gleneagles, King's Course

Golf legend Lee Trevino when he first played the King's Course proclaimed, “If heaven is as good as this, I sure hope they have some tee times left.”

Voted European golf resort of the year 2019, Gleneagles may not be hipster-cool, but it is hard to ignore.



The King's Course, widely thought better than the PGA Centenary, marks its 100th birthday this year. James Braid's masterwork was created in 1919, out of the rolling countryside of Perthshire.

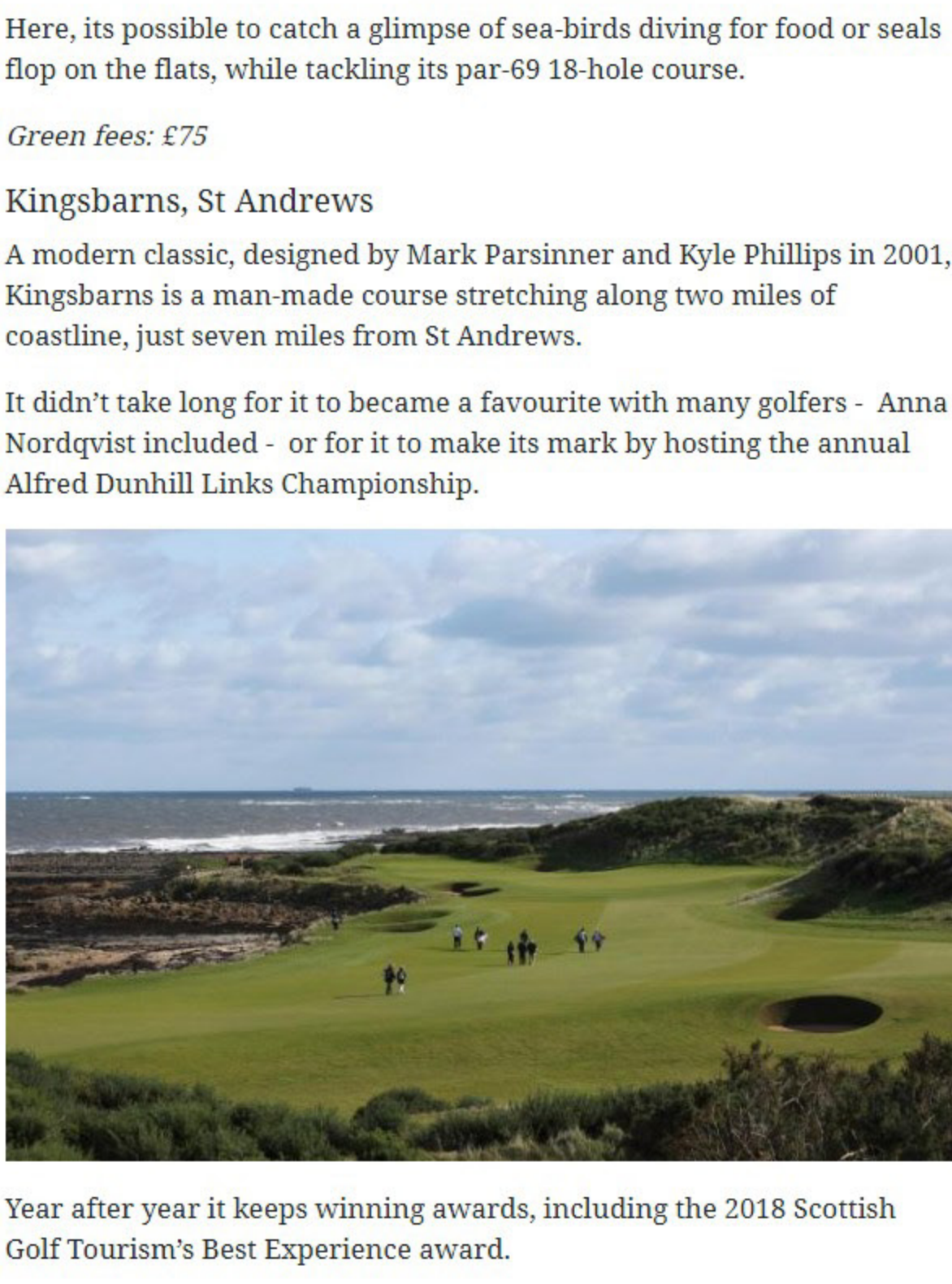
The names of its holes alone are enough to seduce: Silver Tassie, Blinkbonnie, Wee Bogle. Heaven awaits.

Green fees: £150 upwards

St Andrews Links, Old Course

“I feel like I'm back visiting an old grandmother,” said Tony Lema winner of the 1964 British Open.

“She's crotchety and eccentric, but also elegant, and anyone who doesn't fall in love with her has no imagination.”



The Swilcan Bridge, Hell's Bunker.... What golfer doesn't want to play the Old Course, one of the most iconic and historic courses in the world?

Here you can channel a history that goes right back to the 15th century. But, of course, if you can't get on the Old Course – it's currently booked up till November 2019 - there are six other wonderful courses in the St Andrews Links group to entertain and give you the “home of golf” experience, among them the so-called New Course, built in 1895 by Tom Morris, and the truly newest course, The Castle, designed by David McLay Kidd.

Green fees: £190

West Links, North Berwick

Golf Digest described the West Links course at North Berwick as “the most underrated golf course in the world”.

In other words, what is incredible is that, although it is a championship course that has hosted many events, it still manages to keep it still feels like stumbling upon a secret.



It's said to be the world's third oldest course – after St Andrews Old Course and Musselburgh Old Course – played on its original fairways.

The links offers plenty of hazards: snaking stone walls, giant swales, and the sea itself, when the tide sweeps in.

As the club says, “All of these hazards are an important part of our history”.

Green fees: £95

Machrie

It looked a while back as if Machrie on Islay had had its day as a golfing destination.

What had once been the go-to spot during the Blair years for politicians wishing to escape, whilst staying in the nearby dilapidated hotel, went into administration in 2010.

It was saved by ex-BBC Chairman Gavyn Davies and his wife Sue Nye, Gordon Brown's former diary secretary.

Now redeveloped this spot – spreading out over the dunes of Islay – is a golfer's dream.

Visitors can stay in a luxury, high-ceilinged hotel, opened in Summer 2018, relaxing on their outdoor terrace while looking out over the links, which have received a redesign by DJ Russell.

Green fees: £65

Scarista, Isle Of Harris

Ranging over Harris's most breath-takingly spectacular beach, Scarista golf course has been described as one of the most picturesque 9-hole courses in the world.

The Isle of Harris golf club was first set up in 1930, and is now owned by its owners after they purchased it in 2000.

There's nothing else quite like it – with its challenging natural hazards, and distracting views of the gorgeous white sands of the nearby beaches.

Green fees: £15

Cullen Links

A short par-63 18-hole Old Tom Morris course, which Global Golfer has described as “the epitome of quirkiness”.

And rightly so – it's littered with old-style, idiosyncrasies, revellings in the fun of the landscape.

One of these is the Boar Crag, an 80ft high lump of red rock rising out of the links, around which a quartet of exhilarating holes revolves.

Green fees: £30

Cawder

Rated the number one golf course in the Glasgow area according to Golf World Top 100, Cawder offers so many charms, with its views of the Campsie hills, glimpses of the Kelvin and woodland settings as well as city-proximity convenience – not to mention a 17th century mansion as a clubhouse.

You also know you've got something challenging to deal with when you come across a series of holes billed, by a sign, as “Cawder's Amen Corner”. James Braid laid out the original courses, which have been redesigned since.

Green fees: £45

Dunaverty.

“Beyond the end of nowhere” is how some have described the setting of Dunaverty, a golf club by the village of Southend in the Kintyre peninsula.

VisitScotland

A par-66 18-hole natural links, it's set amongst views out to Sanda Island to the south and Ailsa Craig to the east, situated around Dunaverty Rock, ruins of a fortification which once sheltered Robert the Bruce and was the site of a siege in 1647 in which 300 were massacred.

Unpretentious simplicity. If anything deserves the term “hidden gem” this does.

Green fees: £32

Shiskine

It says a lot about the nature of wild Shiskine that many of its holes are blind.

Located on the Isle Of Arran, looking out over the Mull of Kintyre and the Kilbrannan Sound, it's unconventional in its ways and idiosyncratic in its features.

Top 100 Golf Courses have described this course as “a shrine to the way golf used to be played” and noted that the course owes “only the barest influence to the hand of man.”

A short 12-holer racking up a cult reputation.

Green fees: £30

Covesea Links

Situated down the end of a windy road and tucked between Lossiemouth and Hopeman, the nine holes of Covesea follow the contours of a cove, delivering dramatic views of the coast in both directions.

A course for the beginners and the experienced alike – with a philosophy of links golf for everyone.

Green fees: £10

Kilspindie

The East Lothian coastline has plenty of golf courses, but few that deliver this feeling of discovery.

Hidden in Aberlady Bay, which became the first British nature reserve in 1952, it is reached by a private, single-track road.

Here, its possible to catch a glimpse of sea-birds diving for food or seals flop on the flats, while tackling its par-69 18-hole course.

Green fees: £75

Kingsbarns, St Andrews

A modern classic, designed by Mark Parsinner and Kyle Phillips in 2001, Kingsbarns is a man-made course stretching along two miles of coastline, just seven miles from St Andrews.

It didn't take long for it to become a favourite with many golfers - Anna Nordqvist included - or for it to make its mark by hosting the annual Alfred Dunhill Links Championship.

Year after year it keeps winning awards, including the 2018 Scottish Golf Tourism's Best Experience award.

But golfing isn't new to this stretch. There was a nine-hole golf course on the site from 1922, which was lost when the area was mined during the Second World War.

Green fees: £288

The Carrick

Doug Carrick, famed for his courses in his native Canada, designed this 18-hole championship course which opened in 2007.

One of the great inland courses, it has been described as “the most beautiful water hazard in the world” in the shape of Loch Lomond, and boasts a string of stunning views, including that from the 10th hole, Tappet Doon, its most northerly point.

It's also your best hope if you fancy a round near the Bonnie Banks, since Loch Lomond club itself is renowned as one of the hardest courses to get on in Scotland.

The Carrick also has all the perks of being part of a luxury resort, including a spa attached to the clubhouse – though sadly not, currently, a hotel, since Cameron House, which was devastated by a fire isn't planned to reopen until next year.

Green fees: £90

Green fees listed are generally for a single round visitor in peak season.

