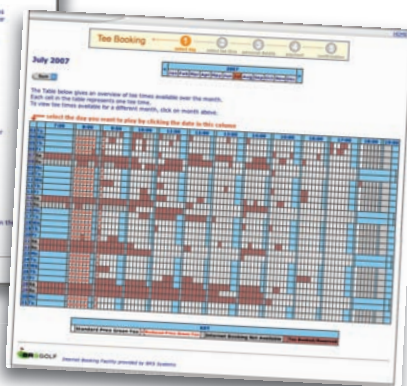
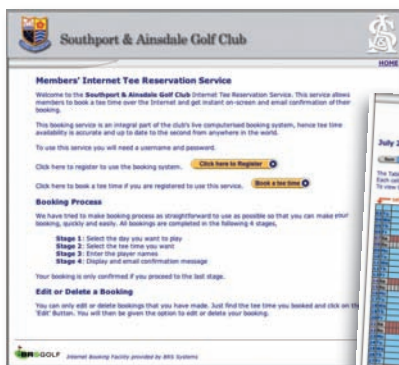


S&A: using an online booking system to put everyone in the picture

As any Club Secretary or Manager knows only too well, members are usually the hardest to please. Take tee management: members want to play at any time, preferably without having to book or wait. Conversely, a Club Manager needs to know when the course is at its busiest and least busy, visitor bookings, tee time availability, booking revenues, etc. But the only way to achieve this is either through manually collating endless course and revenue information, or a PC-based booking system. So can the Club Manager get the information he or she wants, yet still keep the members happy? Yes: BRS Golf's online booking system gives a Manager all the reports he or she needs to manage the course bookings efficiently, but it's flexible enough to meet the needs of members who don't want to book. What BRS is learning from their club clients where members book, and from those whose members don't, is that all the members like the control that comes from seeing when they can play, and who else has booked and playing.

"It's helping us improve the service to our members, to streamline the administration of the club, and to project a very professional face to the outside world."



Southport and Ainsdale GC: putting its members back in control

Southport and Ainsdale GC, better known around the golfing world as S&A, is a private members club that is also one of the most sought after golfing experiences for tour operators and groups, let alone casual visitors, societies, and members. Even with a PC-based (offline) booking system at the club, S&A's members couldn't see when the tee was available unless they came to the club – which is less than convenient when you're in the office or at home. So when Mark Vanner, S&A's Managing Secretary, saw an online booking system that enabled his members to do just that, he knew it was the ideal way to enhance the service provided by the club to its members.

Mark first saw the possibilities S&A's participation in the Merseyside golf tourism strategy, better known nowadays as England's Golf Coast. In April this year, the club acquired its own online tee time booking system: "The main aim is to enable members to see when tee times are reserved for them so they can book when they want, and for visitors to see what times remain

available for them. That puts our members back in control, and able to see the tee times wherever they can get online." This is particularly relevant for times during the week; for example, Ladies Day is on Thursdays so the tee is only available to visitors on the Thursday afternoons – unless the Ladies are playing one of their all day meetings or competitions.

Now Mark has gone even further and put the whole of the 2008 club diary onto the system's calendar, so that anyone looking to book in 2008 can do so safe in the knowledge that the tee is genuinely available. To make things easier for visitors (and the club), online payment is now available as well.

Reports

Mark particularly appreciates the management information that can be obtained from the system: "The main ones I use are the revenue and the usage reports. Within those, there are a further twelve reports in the revenue one, eg. revenues from visitors, tour operators and so on. In the usage ones, there are six, again broken down by type of reservation and user, time of week, and so on. It's perfect for knowing exactly what's happening on the course, and to prove to some members that we're nowhere near as busy as they sometimes like to imagine!"

An everyday tool from a helpful, friendly company Mark Vanner: "The BRS system is very easy to use. We're still exploring its full capabilities, but we're really pleased with it. The training was good, and very straightforward – we did it on a face to face basis over two mornings – and there's a refresher training day still to come."

Simon Aplin is responsible for the day to day operation of the booking system: "We now use the BRS system like a diary for all our bookings, ie. facilities, catering requirements, numbers, contact details as well as tee times. It's given our members an extra service which they really appreciate, and to prove the point, since April over 400 members have registered their e-mail addresses and contact details with the system. The members really like being able to see their bookings, especially when they're bringing guests to the club and want to be certain of a game."

Mark also appreciates the way that the BRS team likes to do business: "They are very helpful, very friendly, and very responsive. They're happy to tailor their system to the club's needs, and we've got a couple of developments in the pipeline."

And overall, what does Mark make of the investment in BRS Golf's online booking system? "It's helping us improve the service to our members, to streamline the administration of the club, and to project a very professional face to the outside world." That's a big claim for a piece of software, but in the case of BRS's online booking system it happens to be true, as their customers are consistently telling us.

