

The Greenkeepers

No. 3 : Vic Smith

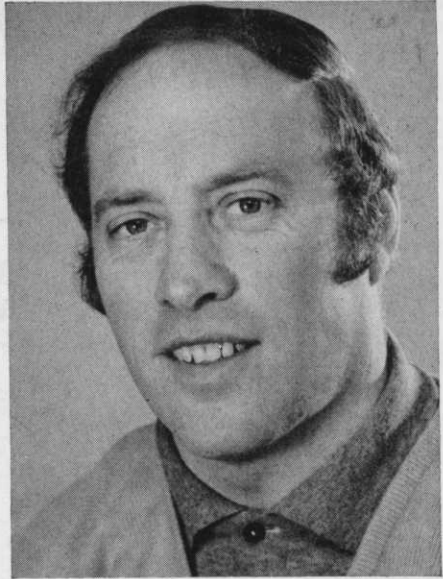
VIC SMITH took over as Head Greenkeeper of Handsworth Golf Club, Birmingham, in 1967 when Ernie Benbow retired after 40 years service at the Club. After leaving school at Market Bosworth in Leicestershire Vic did two years night school studying botany and then went into the army for two years. Among the places he visited were Aden, Algiers, Ceylon, Egypt, Malta, Gibraltar, Singapore, Hong Kong, Japan and Korea.

After leaving the army he went back to Handsworth, becoming first assistant after several years. The skills which Ernie Benbow had taught him stood him well when he became Head Greenkeeper and he further increased his experience when he went to the U.S.A. with the British Greenkeepers in 1973.

Vic has served the Association well having been for the last 14 years on the Midlands Section Committee of which he is now Chairman. He is also Vice Chairman of the B.G.G.A. Having played to 6, his present handicap is 10 but says he doesn't have the time to play so much these days.

Handsworth is a 21 hole inland type course and undulating. In the past ten years the course has been beautified by the planting of 10,000 trees, a project which members yet to come will appreciate. The Club has 850 members in all of which 400 are playing members. It shares the distinction with the Association of having Carl Bretherton as President.

A total of five full time greenkeeping staff have a wide range of equipment to help them. These include 2 Tractors, 1 Trencher, 1 Shredder, 1 Rotary Soil Sifter, 2 Certes, 1 Sprayer, 1 Ransome 24" Mower, 1 Rotorake, 1 Rotovator, 2 Flymo, 1 Hayter 26" Rotary, 1 Toro 70", 1 Ransome Hahn, 1 Sisis Aerater Greens, 1 Aerater Fairways, 2 Hayter Rotarys 18", 1 Over-green, 1 Mk 10 Quintuple Gang Mower, 1 Mk 12



Quintuple Gang Mower, 2 Cyclone Spreaders, 1 Van.

Vic's choice of grass seeds are Cannock, Fisons and Mommersteeg. For fertilizers he relies on Cannock, Fisons and S.A.I. and his choice of fungicides is Tecto, Mersil, Maysan and Mildothane.

One of the special problems presented by the course is vandalism as it is on the edge of a 300-acre open space, but it is fortunate that Birmingham City Council are building a new Municipal Golf Course next to the course—the architect is Mr. Fred Hawtree. Handsworth G.C. now has acquired an Alsatian dog which they find a very good deterrent. One other problem is the drains, part of the course has a considerable amount of clay, while the other half is gravel. The drains are of the old type 2" and 4½" down which created trouble before they had the trencher. Over the last 4 years three new holes have been made through dense woods, bracken and bogs.