Brian Turner has no doubt about what becoming Toro Excellence in Greenkeeping Award winner means to him as he told Scott MacCallum

When Sunningdale Course Manager Brian Turner found out what becoming the third Toro Excellence in Greenkeeping Award winner meant to him he said "It's the icing on the cake." And Brian's cake, when the cake in question means his own greenkeeping career, you can tell he is particularly proud of his achievement.

Sunningdale Golf Club has always played a huge part in his life. He is a native of the town, he'd caddied at the club, he was, and still is, an Artisan member and, when he started greenkeeping, it was as a 19 year-old member of the Sunningdale staff having shelved thoughts of becoming a professional golfer - his current handicap is 1 and he has been as low as +1.

That affection was the magnet that drew Brian back to the club three years ago when he had an excellent job at Worpleston Golf Club.

"It was always my dream to return to Sunningdale as Course Manager and I was delighted when I got the job in '96," said Brian.

His CV contains the names of three prestigious golf clubs located within a radius that would be covered by very few number of Tiger Wood drives.

"I left Sunningdale to move to Wentworth. I was in my early 20s, about to get married and there was accommodation with the Wentworth job," explained Brian.

Over the next 12 years he rose to become Head Greenkeeper on the West Course before the job of Head Greenkeeper at Worpleston came up. He spent 13 years at the club, even winning the famous Worpleston Foursomes during his time there.

Sunningdale was the only place I would have left Worpleston for as I had a really good job there - I could play golf with the members and had a very good relationship with everyone at the club. I thoroughly enjoyed my experiences," he said.

When the job became available in '96 Brian wasn't going to apply as, for him to get it, a tradition going back to when the club was founded, would have to be broken.

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"We do a tremendous amount of aeration which can be a nightmare for the golfer and, as a result, a nightmare for us...you know you're going to get flak but you just have to bite the bullet.

Should the golfing calendar oblige, Brian likes to do his major aeration in August, something he started while at Worpleston.

"Hollow tining was always something that was done in spring and autumn but I never felt it was the right time of year because the recovery rate is slower and the greens are softer. I thought August would be a great month to do it as the soil is warm and the grass is still growing, while you don't have to worry about smearing as the cores come up.

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"I said to Worpleston that I'd like to do it, we tried it and within two weeks you wouldn't have known we'd hollow tined. You'd be surprised how many people now hollow tine in August," said Brian.

In addition he makes a point of combining his hollow tining with vertidraining.

"The vertidrain does leave the surface a little bobbly and unenjoyable, but if you put the hollow tiner on it smooths out the vertidrain holes to the extent that you can't tell it's been vertidrained."