JOHN’S CHARITY WHIZZ

Neil Faulkner, Course Manager at East Herts Golf Club, has raised £50,000 for the Gibbons family charity in memory of their son. He was joined by the club’s golfers and says he’s loved every minute. Neil joined the club straight from school and served a four-year apprenticeship. He continued to work at the course - and his career - before becoming Course Manager ten years ago. He said: “I used to watch The Masters when I was a kid and marvelled out how fantastic the golf courses looked. I thought ‘someone’s got to look after that, what a great job’ and that’s how it all started.”

“I’ve loved every minute, the best thing about the job is there is a different challenge every day. Of course it’s very, very hard work and there’s so much to get involved with, for example today I’ve been painting fence posts. But when you get great feedback from golfers it makes it all worthwhile - we recently had a members match versus a local club and the visitors said the course looked superb, which was so satisfying to hear.

“But my main priority is to keep the people who pay their annual fees happy.” He added that members had recently asked him where the club’s finances had been directed, so Neil and his team made a point of putting all their machinery on show during a competition. He said: “They generally only see one guy on a mower so they were amazed we had so much kit when they walked past, and began to understand where their membership fees were spent.

“It’s all part of communicating with them, because if they don’t like the club they’ll leave simple as that.”

ROUTE 66 WINS SCOTTISH NATIONAL

This year’s Scottish National Tournament was hosted by Large Golf Club on Thursday 13 June and drew an excellent 62 competitors from all over Scotland who benefitted from glorious sunshine throughout the day. A parkland course, it was originally designed as a 9-hole course before becoming a full 18-holer in 1953. Playing to its full length from medal tees it covers some 6,150 yards with a par of 70 and a CBI of 71.

This year, we had our own version of Iain Robinson on the first tee to announce each player. John Stedson has worked with the PGA on a number of their events and kindly agreed to participate adding a touch of class to proceedings. First on at 11.15am was a guest, Gordon Clarke from West Kilbride Golf Club. Subsequent games then took every 9 minutes until the very last game at 2.15pm comprising an East/West combination of Gregor Wilson (Turnberry) and Robbie Murdoch (Dundas Park).

The standard of golfer taking part was very high with more than half their field being single handicappers. Indeed it proved to be one of the lowest handicaps that turned in the performance of the day to win the Championship trophy. Gordon Sangster from Cathkin Braes Golf Club produced a magnificent gross score of 66 that included an eagle, 4 birdies and only 2 bogeys. Gordon managed to get the turn in only 29 blows narrowly missing out on a short putt for the 28.

Not to be completely overshadowed by Gordon, Iain MacDonald on his home course recorded a great score of 68 gross and less his 2 handicap won our Friendship Trophy with a nett 66. In addition to winning the trophies, Gordon and Iain will have their entries to the BIGGA National Tournament at Peedie Heath paid for and they will receive expenses towards travel and accommodation.

There was one common theme shared by all competitors on the day, their unequivocal praise of the golf course condition. Our whole-hearted congratulations are reserved for Iain Barr, Course Manager and his team for producing an excellent facility for the competition. Even the tricky position of the 18th flag, thanks to George Morrison for that one, didn’t diminish the players’ admiration of the course.

Throughout our day we were treated to a very warm welcome by Keith Howie (Professional) and the other members of the team.

Andy O’Hara, Scottish Chairman, was on hand at the end of the day to thank the captain, Brian Fulton, the committee, Keith and everyone else for the tremendous hospitality that was received and presented a Quaich to the club as a thank you for the courtesy of the course and clubhouse. Keith thanked Andy and confirmed the club’s delight at hosting this event and for the hard work of all greenkeeping staff required at golf courses throughout the country.

Congratulations to all who took part and we hope to see everyone at next year’s championship at Henstown Golf Club on Thursday 12 June...

John Young

PRIZE LIST

SOGA CHALLENGE CUP (SCRATCH CHAMPION)
Gordon Sangster Cathkin Braes 66

FRIENDSHIP TROPHY (NET CHAMPION)
Iain MacDonald Large 68 2 66

RANSOMES TROPHY – 1ST CLASS
1. Kenneth Mitchell St Andrews Links 77 5 72
2. Loochie McIntosh Cathkin Braes 77 7 72
3. Gary Rough Lothian Orange 72 3 75

PATTISON TROPHY – 2ND CLASS
1. Martin Lothian Turnberry 82 12 70
2. John Watson Duffield 82 12 74
3. Iain MacDonald Large 83 10 73

ST MUNGO TROPHY – AYRSHIRE SECTION
1. Kenneth Mitchell Cardross 90 16 74
2. John Wilson Irvine Bogle 94 18 76
3. Michael Macdonald East Kilbride 96 22 74

DICK AITKEN TROPHY – BEST HEAD GREENKEEPER
Derek Wilson Irvine Bogle 81 8 73

DICK AITKEN TROPHY – BEST ASSISTANT
David Simpson Crieff 71 +1 72

SOGA TROPHY – BEST VETERAN
Archie Dunlop Auchterarder 79 5 74

ST MUNGO TROPHY – LYBURN SECTION
Iain McDonald Large 66
Martin Lothian Turnberry 70
David Wilson Irvine Bogle 72
Derek Wilson Irvine Bogle 73

TOTAL 281

QUAICH – TRADE PRIZE
David Nelson Nelson Vecchio 77 5 72

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP QUALIFIERS
Scratch: Gordon Sangster Cathkin Braes Golf Club
Net: Iain McDonald Large Golf Club