Blood, sweat and cheers

The winners and the people who put them there: from left, Barry Heaney, Gerard McCartney, Graham Dale, James Braithwaite, Edward Kitson, Stuart Adams and Mark Gunter

great affection and it is not without reason because it is a course upon which he has poured a lot of blood, sweat and tears.

"I began work as a labourer on January 3 1993 building the course. There was just the Head Greenkeeper, another labourer and myself with an architect overseeing the work. We did everything by hand, wheelbarrowing, shovelling, and levelling with rakes. The greens are all USGA spec and we put in the drainage and the gravel carpet," explained James.

"It took us three months to complete and I lost nearly three stones in the time and suffered from wrist splints after damaging tendons. It was quite hard going," he adds with typical understatement.

The construction work complete James asked if he could go to college and was eventually given the go-ahead.

It was then that the need arose for the other two jobs to make ends meet and he began gardening and working in the nearby Walworth Castle Hotel.

"Getting to the finals of the Toro/PGA European Tour Student Greenkeeper of the Year has been great because I have learned a lot from fellow student greenkeepers and tutors who were excellent. The competition has opened my eyes to what you can do," said James, who played age level county cricket for Derbyshire as a leg spinning opening bat.

"Even if I hadn't won being one of the eight who made it to the final would have been wonderful for my future career prospects but to have taken the top prize is superb.

"It is my ambition to go as far as I can as fast as I can. I do need a lot of experience after all I've only got three years in the industry and less than a year on a working golf course.

"In the shorter term I'm doing my level 3. I'd also like to do D32 and D33 and become an assessor.

"Further down the line I'd love to be working on a top championship golf course. It's got to be everyone's ambition... or to turn a new course into a championship course," said James, who lists his major influences as his first Head Greenkeeper Jim Webster, current Head Greenkeeper Richard Creane, as well as his tutors at Askham Bryan.

"I'd love to see our course expand and would be one of the best in the area. It is a long nine holes and it might go to 18," explained James, whose wife, Wendy, together with kids Carla (four), and Adam (nine months), are right behind him.

The finalists had battled through college and regional qualifying to earn their place at Aldwark Manor and the huge strides in greenkeeper education have made could be measured by the quality of the eight who made it so difficult for the judges to pick a winner.

The other five finalists were Martin Bond, Richard Mills, Chas Campen, David Ray and Stephen Gransby.

But let's leave the last word to Dean Cleaver, Chairman of BIGGA's Education Sub Committee.

"I have been in greenkeeping for 22 years and have seen the improvement in the quality of the education, and the students it is producing, and it makes me proud to be associated with the industry."

What's in store for James: see overleaf.
It was fascinating to see another world of greenkeeping at work

The previous Toro/PGA European Tour Student Greenkeeper of the Year, Euan Grant gives James Braithwaite some insight as to what he might expect while in the United States.

It is only after being back a short while and having been firmly reintroduced to a 6am start that the significance of my experience in the USA has become evident.

Upon selection as the Toro/PGA European Tour Student Greenkeeper of the Year, I was very excited about being offered the opportunity to study turfgrass management in America on the eight week Winter School for Turf Managers at the University of Massachusetts.

The experience was invaluable, very educational and a great eye-opener. The depth of scientific detail offered required long hours outside the classroom to become fluent with this information and to be able to convert theory into usable turf management practices.

There were 11 separate subjects including irrigation, plant physiology, design and architecture, turfgrass calculations, entomology (study of pests to me) which were all lectured very formally by specialists in their own field. I was certainly kept on my toes with seven exams and four reports to complete during this time.

The course taught me a great deal, and followed on very well from the craft level theory and knowledge that I gained from phase II City & Guilds Greenkeeping and Sportsurf Management. I did however find that more emphasis was placed upon the importance of efficient irrigation, precise scientific theory and computerised organisation.

There is a fantastic career in American greenkeeping with very good wages and job opportunities and due to this a lot of highly educated men and women enter the profession at a fairly high level (deputy or superintendent) - rightly or wrongly, that is a separate argument - with turf related degree qualifications from various universities, but relatively little practical experience in time management, prioritising and dealing with golfers.

One aspect of greenkeeping I noticed in the States was the lack of craft level education offered to "junior" greenkeepers. There does not appear to be an equivalent to our S/NVQ or City & Guilds phase/level 1 or 2, also no apprenticeships, or Government subsidised YTS schemes.

My belief is that, in general, British greenkeeping skills are improving rapidly with the necessary focus on education. In educating our whole workforce we are creating a base on which hands on experience can build. The S/NVQ qualifications are the means by which, either on one day a week part-time courses or block release courses, newcomers to the industry can incorporate both theory and practical, and importantly share their own work place gained experiences with others in the same situation. A business studies graduate would not expect a decent management position with British Gas, for example, without also having the necessary experience.

In educating our greenstaff we are climbing a great step to becoming a very professional career, in which people will take
Most of all, I made a lot of friends and contacts from all over North America and Canada. I have significantly increased my knowledge and have matured in my outlook to golf course management.

"Hollow coring and top dressing"
-Raymond Day, Sundridge Park GC

interest and notice. Young people can now enter the profession identifying a career path with job satisfaction, increasing financial reward and, if worthy, job security. In return, golf clubs must recognise the importance of an entire educated greenstaff. Increasing the awareness of the whole greens team, is more essential nowadays given the latest health and safety legislation, European directives and the fact that course managers are unavoidably spending less time on the golf course and more time in meetings, writing reports, analysing budgets and planning ahead.

It is imperative that all greenstaff, through college learning, seminars, information days and learning from our colleagues and superiors, have educated answers, holding educational evenings for the golfers, question and answer sessions, machinery demonstrations and just talking on the golf course we can aim to constantly improve our image, let the golfing public know that golf courses do not look after themselves and that we do actually know what we are doing.

Britain is not such a long way behind the USA in the greenkeeping profession. They have some huge advantages, eg. budget, with which most of us cannot compete but our skills, knowledge and organisation right through the greens team is not inferior.

I must give a massive thank you to the Toro Company for sponsoring my chance to study and travel in the States, for giving me the opportunity to visit its machinery and irrigation factories and headquarters. Witnessing the research, manufacturing and testing facilities and procedures were fascinating, as was the San Francisco show.

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‘The experience was invaluable, very educational and a great eye-opener’
Says last year’s winner, Euan Grant (pictured)
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The winter workshops have now been organised and the programme is as follows:

Wednesday November 8th starting at 7pm, the subject is “Risk Assessment – Responsibilities and Control”, the speaker is Mr John Alburt. Wednesday December 6th starting at 7pm, the subject is “Identifying and Controlling Diseases” and the speaker is Dr Neil Baldwin. Wednesday January 11th starting at 5pm and the subject is “Manual Handling Efficiency” and the speaker is Mr W. Greenfield.

The Manual Handling workshop will allow delegates to receive a certificate of attendance which will be issued by our section. There is no charge for the workshops and this has been made possible by the sponsorship of the Grass Roots Trading Company. I would like to thank Jim Benett for his help in the organisation of the workshops.

Tony Dunstan

North West

The Autumn tournament was played this year at Didsbury GC and once again the weather was kind to us, at least until we finished playing. Didsbury GC, which is a parkland course, was in great condition, thanks to Alec Davies and his staff, who have been superb. We should also mention the effects of the long dry summer, it was not evident at Didsbury. Alec tells me that, due to the course being dry lying, they are not effected by drought, and all through the dry spell fairways were cut twice weekly. As previously stated, the course was in beautiful condition and a credit to the staff. I would like to thank Didsbury GC for allowing us the courtesy of playing on their course, the caterers for a lovely meal, the members for making us so welcome, and for their gifts to swell the prize table, the bar staff, and John Fleet the Club Steward for lending me his best shirt.

We have had three new members this year and the courtesy of playing on their course, the caterers for a lovely meal, the members for making us so welcome, and for their gifts to swell the prize table, the bar staff, and John Fleet the Club Steward for lending me his best shirt, although this may have changed dependent on availability of players and teams. The results will be included in the next magazine. The four 200 Club winners will appear next magazine. The four 200 Club winners are: Category 1: 0-9 - P Tatlow (Haydock Park), Category 2: 10-15 - B Murray (Barnet), Category 3: 16-21 - A Mclatchie, and Hughie Mclatchie, Peterhead. Well done to these two and thank you for supporting your section to my Augusta Fund, a similar amount from every BIGGA member should just be enough!

North of Scotland

Congratulations to the Scottish lads on winning the Hayter Challenge, especially Section members Kevin Peace, Inverurie; Sandy Reid, Letham Grange and Patrick Sullivan, Craigie Hill, and Stuart Hogg, Fortrose, who actually won it. The three new members have joined the Section, Martin Smith a trainee at Torvean, Inverness; Garry Maclennan, a trainee at Strathpeffer, and Angus Macrae, from Carnoustie, who is a student at Elmwood College. We welcome back to the Section Alick Mackay.

The Autumn meeting held at Helensburgh on the September 20 was a resounding success with over 50 competitors taking part. The course was set up in championship condition, fast greens and thoughtful pin positions.

We well done on producing the course in such good condition. Thank you to Captain for presenting the prizes and the members for allowing our section members courtesy of the course. The catering staff should be congratulated on producing an excellent meal for all, matching the fine sunshine of the day. The results on the day were as follows: 1st - S Taylor – Kilmarnock 72-7-20, 2nd – D Johnstous - 77-6-71, 3rd - G Brun - E Kilbride - 81-7-74, 2nd Class – 1st - A McDowell – Torrance House - 64-16-68, 2nd - R Miles - Helensburgh - 83-13-70, 3rd - G Mowatt - Helensburgh - 85-11-74, 3rd Class - 1st – G Dingwall – Crowwood - 83-18-65, 2nd – J McCann – Gliddoch House - 96-24-72, 3rd - G Nisbet - Kilmarnock - 100-24-76. \n
Nearest the Pin was won by A Booth and Longest Drive was won by G Brun - East Kilbride, Visitor’s prize - N Jenkins - Cawder - 86-11-75. Trade Prize - B Ingles - Souters - 73-7-71.

A couple of errors on my part in the last issue of the magazine, firstly the AGM date is December 7 at Renfrew instead of November 14, and secondly notification of events will be individual instead of booklet form.

Recently a challenge was received from the East section for an 11 a side football game, therefore a trial has to be arranged to select a team. A date will be chosen within November and members interested should contact a committee member and the vice captain.

The live a side football tournament so far has had the following entries: Glasgow GC, Balmore GC, Douglas Park GC, Easter Moffat and Drumpteller, Pollock and Cowglen, Cambus, Ranrew and Gliddoch, and East Kilbride. The date set was Sunday 29th October from 10am -12pm although this may have changed dependent on availability of players and teams. The results will be included in the future issues.

Finally congratulations to Steven Hogg and wife Marie on the recent birth of a baby girl (Rebecca), I hope wife and child are in full health. If anybody has interesting information for publication please phone myself on 0141 942 5554 at any time.

Stuart Taylor

East Midlands

Our section had the privilege this year to play our Autumn Tournament at Kedleston Park. The course was in excellent condition which is a great credit to Dave Leatherland and his staff. Despite some awful weather forecasts we played on a lovely autumn day with the following members collecting the prizes: Category 1: 0-9 - P Tattow (Kedleston Park) 75-6-69, R Barker (Kirby Muxloe) 75-6-72, P Forswath (Ramsdale Park) 78-7-68, D Leatherland (Kedleston Park) 81-7-68, Category 2: P Billings (Cotgrave Place) 78-10-64, A Bindley (Kirby Muxloe) 84-15-69, J Dickinson (Hucknall) 89-10-79, G Soode (Scratchford) 89-19-79. Category 3: T Foster (Cotgrage Place) 90-19-71, M Johnson (Hinckley) 92-21-71, G Robson (Lingdale) 95-24-71, M Bindley (Kirby Muxloe) 93-21-72. Nearest the Pin – R Barker, Longest Drive – P Forswath.

Our thanks go the Kedleston Park GC for their courtesy and hospitality on the day, also to our sponsors for the day Charnwood and Highmeres Lawnmower Services for presenting us with such a fine prize table. This year’s winners of the doubles K/O cup were D Leatherland and P. Tattow. Please try to attend this year’s AGM at Kirby Muxloe as it is important that members bring forward their views and ideas for next year’s committee.

Categorisations to Ian Dunmore on winning the longest drive at the Hayter Challenge final.

Moving on to The Longfords Men’s invitation and again section members fared well with Richard Barker and Richard Minton (of Miracle Professional) winning the Best Gross score of the day with 72, and Roger Barker and myself finishing in the 2s competition. Antony Bindow

GRENDEKEEPER INTERNATIONAL November 1995 29
this difficult true links course. Nett scores in the 70s were such that one could not seem too confident back at the clubhouse - in the possible victory and a walk around the course to encourage the team. The managing director of our sponsors was present too. Wait a minute about our next man in wasn’t having a good day, the gap has closed to seven shots. Not to worry our last four done lads you were brilliant. Every one of you.

I should like to thank Tyrells Wood GC for allowing us the courtesy of the course. The caterers for an excellent meal and my staff for helping me through a hot dry summer and producing a course of which I am proud.

Bert Watson. Head Greenkeeper, Tyrells Wood GC.

My thanks go to Bert for taking the time to produce this piece.

Dinner Dance tickets are still available November 10th Reigate Manor Hotel price £18.00.

Cleveland
Welcome to new members: Gary Carmichael, Billingham GC; Roger Douglas, Billingham GC; Andrew Hall, Middleton- brough GC; Paul Keyworth, Whitby GC; Stuart Cook, Salt- burn GC; Roger Everson, Hallworth GC.

Welcome also to section sponsor Dick Lawson Ltd, Kidzbah main dealer.

Future events - including January 18 1996 Chris Peel ADAS on “Annual Meadow Grass”, February 15 Dave Stephenson of D & E Turf – Toro main dealer, March 21 British Seed Houses, Bob Tweddle on “New Cultivars”.

Three Greenkeepers meet first Monday in the month at 1pm.

Our section sponsors are: Dick Lawson, Brian Skeen, Liam Gallway, Turf Care and Bowes & Raine.

Bruce Burnett

East of Scotland

Well not a lot to report this month so here we go. In Oc- tober we had our Autumn Tournament at Prestfield GC with kind courtesy of the course from Captain and Council. Thanks to them. It was a good day I have been told, as I was not able to attend due to other commitments so there will be a full report in next month’s issue when I get a report of all the scores. Tickets for the dance on December 2nd are going fast with only a few left so get booking them now or you will be too late. The section AGM will be held at Swanston GC on Thursday November 23. The day will be sponsored by Stewarts & Co this year so let’s see a big turnout for the morning seminar and the afternoon AGM, as the turnout has been poor in years gone by. Remember it is your chance to ask us about your section, so lets see you there. By the time you read this you will have entertained the North East of England greenkeepers in our annual Stewarts & Co match so we will let you know the result next month. Letters concerning the AGM and winter lectures will be with you soon. So if you have anything to report or questions do get in touch.

Chris Yeaman

Surrey

On Tuesday September 5 the Parker Salver was held at Tyrells Wood GC, it was a better ball competition and 13 pairs played. The weather was dry for most part of the day but the last few pairs got caught in a heavy shower of rain but this did not deter the winners with an incredible score of 49 points obtained by Alex Bradshaw and I. Lam- bert of Maiden GC, a right pair of “Bandits”! 2nd. Ronnie Christie and L Dennis-Smither with 46 points 3rd. the Box- ell pair with 45 points. All I can say about the scoring is that due to the long dry summer the ball goes a long way, but you still have to get the points. Some greenkeepers obviously pick guests with dodgy handicaps.

Northern

By the time you read this the weather and drought will have been forgotten and 1997 will be a distant memory and no doubt hollow tining and top dressing will be complete and your efforts will be directed towards winter construction work.

Plan sections for the winter programme will include a lecture on Golf Course Design and Construction to be given by ADAS at West Bowling GC in November and a talk on Irrigation by Par 4 of Ripon in March also at West Bowling GC. The Christmas golf competition is in the process of being arranged and it is hoped this will be held in December followed by the AGM. A mailshot giving further details will be circulated to all members as soon as possible.

A two day Northern Region Management Course will be held at the Dean Court Hotel in York, February 7 and 8. The Course will be £50 per person and includes one night accommodation and meals. Anybody interested should contact Bob Lupton, Regional Administrator on 01782 750539 as soon as possible as places are limited.

Our good wishes to Brian Carr who has left Howley Hall GC and taken a post with Chapel Allerton Tennis Club. Brian was unhappy with the structure of the golf club committee at Howley.

Northumberland Section wish him a long and happy retirement.

Norman Seddon, sales representative for Aitkens, retired at the end of August and many friends in the Northern Section wish him a long and happy retirement.

If you have any news or information which would be of interest to Northern Section members please contact me on 01423 889058.

Alan Gamble

Ayrshire

The section’s autumn outing was held on the 16th September over Kilnamannoch Barassie. It was a welcome relief from a summer spent mostly holding hoses at all

Devon and Cornwall

My report this month starts with your legal help card which you receive as part of your membership package. During the summer I needed the advice of the legal help line regarding my consumer rights after a problem in a member’s car. The advice enabled me to return to the shop armed with the legal facts to back up my rights. I hope that many colleagues take this course seriously as it is beneficial to every member. As always the section is looking for new members to join the committee. Anyone interested should contact me on 01740 844056 to discuss this further.

Richard Whyman

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The autumn East of England section tournament was held at Spalding GC. Sponsoring the day was Lambs Lawnmowers of Peterborough, with other prizes donated by Atkins, Oliver Bro Seeds, Fieldcare, Rigby Taylor and Lubrication Engineers. The course was in superb condition thanks to Head Greenkeeper Duncan Gray and his staff.

The AGM is in November when we hope to organise nine holes before the meeting. A winter lecture will be run in February following on from last year’s successful seminar, hopefully at Kenwick Park (more details will follow).

Graeme Macdonald

South Wales

Congratulations to Neil Smith and his wife Meryl on their recent wedding celebrations, I hope the hangovers have subsided and the mower lines are back on course.

My personal thanks to all of those who gave up their holidays and free time to be a member of the Greenkeepers Support Team at the recent Walker Cup. There are too many to mention personally, but you will all know who you are! A sincere congratulations to David Ward and his committed young team of staff who worked tirelessly to bring the course to perfection only to see it attacked mercilessly by the dreaded Tack Patch Fungi. I’m sure that I speak on behalf of everyone that was present when I say that an enjoyable time was had by all. It was an adventure and a pleasure to be involved. Our thanks also to the Royal Porthcawl GC for their invitation to be involved and for their hospitality during the event.

Fabulous weather, a glorious location, the autumn competition at the Langland Bay GC for the Jacobsen Cup. A sincere thank you to Keith Morgan for his continued support and sponsorship of this event. As always the prize table that was on offer was superb, our thanks also to Martin and Jonathan Morgan who represented Keith Morgan Mowers in Keith’s absence. The attendance could have been better, but as they say “it’s the quantity that counts”.

Results:

Winner of the Jacobsen Cup, with a Net 66, winning a golf bag was Andrew Hatcher of the Creigiau GC. Second best nett with a 70 was P Lacey (yours truly) winning a “Hippo” sweater. Winner of the Presidents Cup, with a Gross of 76 and winning a windcheater was Inco’s Mike Jones. Winner of the Waycott Cup with a 72 was Caerphilly’s Julian Bartlett Jones. Our thanks to all at the Langland Bay GC for their hospitality, to the caterers for an excellent meal and to Ken Payne and his staff for their hard work in preparing the course, (who would have thought that they had Verti-Drained the Greens one week prior to our arrival), that’s what you call living dangerously.

My sincere apologies go to Kevin Green and his team organisers for the Annual Match between the sections that didn’t take place. For those who don’t know, the match that should of taken place at the Cotswold Hills GC, Cheltenham had to be called off through lack of support. Again apologies to the South West Section and also to Cotswood Hills for wasting their valuable time.


Peter Lacey

Midland

Having spoken to several Head Greenkeepers/Course Managers in the area, we all seem to have the same problem. Members, with short memories of the very dry summer, who wonder why we have bare patches on the fairways. One member thought that they had Verti-Drained the Greens.

The Autumn Tournament was played at Moatstock GC on September 29th. The weather held good for the whole day, which we all expected as it was the Reverend’s (Traford/Greens’) treatment day with his BIGGA colleagues. Results:

1. (Gross) P. Woodham 111; 1. (Nett) D. Fellows 106; 2. P. Loffman 107; 3. V. Lee 109 (Countback); 4. P. Holtman 109; S. A. Roberts 110.5; J. Palmer 112; 7. M. Culler 112; S. M. Hughes 113.5; D. M. Jones; 10; R. Thomas 114.5; P. L. Richardson 115.

Longest drive sponsored by TACIT – P. Woodham; Nearest the Pin sponsored by TACIT – P. Woodham.

The trade prize was won by Ivan Toon (ALS) with an amazing score of 102. Unfortunately the video cameraman put off another good contender for the prize when a case of camera shyness got the better of him.

Thank you to Moatstock Park GC, the Captain Mr Walker, Andrew Ross and his staff and finally to the clubhouse and catering staff for their warm welcome.

Many thanks also to Sunderland for the prize, all companies for their support and R. Jones (Motrac) and John Mullins (Supaturf).

The section presented R. Stonebridge with a Whisky Decanter and four glasses with a plaque from the Midlands Section.

The Christmas Tournament at Worfield GC will be followed by the AGM at 5.30pm – as mentioned in the October issue.

New members into the section are – Peter Woolridge, Andrew Lane, Reginald Islsey, David Richardson and David Shortridge.

Finally to end on a sad note may all the members of Midland Section send sincerest condolences to the families of Mr Peter Dodds and Mr Bill Boyce who died recently.

Kim Blake

South West

With Winter now upon us and colleagues having enrolled students for full and part time courses in Greenkeeping Management so the opportunity for education at section level becomes available in several respects.

Firstly, as briefly mentioned in last month’s report, Education Officer Ken Richardson has now confirmed that a management course will take place at Thornbury Golf Centre near Bristol on February 12 and 13, 1996. Frank Newbury is the instructor for a course entitled “Essentials for Busy Supervisors”. There are vacancies for a maximum of 12 people at a greatly subsidised figure of £50 per head which includes accommodation and meals. Anyone interested should contact Ken at Headquarters sending a cheque for £10 as a deposit to secure a place.

By now everyone will have received an application form for BTME 1996 with prices kept at £99 for members. Many people have already shown interest so an early return of the booking form would be advisable.

Another date for the diary as stated last month is this year’s Regional Educational Seminar to be held once again at Cannington College on November 29.

Finally to conclude the education theme a First Aid course has been arranged for November 21 at Filton GC, Bristol, to be run by Medical Training Services. This worthwhile course covers emergency treatment from the small cut or sprain to giving life-saving heart massage. If interested please contact me as soon as possible on 0117 9373127 to book a place. The cost of day to include lunch will be determined dependent on numbers.

Our running in team matches came to an end on September 21 when we played the South Coast Section at the Midleton/Southend GC and were beaten convincingly.

Those who went thoroughly enjoyed the day which culminated in an excellent evening meal and late return home! Thanks to the South Coast folks for organising the day and for their hospitality.

The match against the South Wales Section unfortunately had to be cancelled due to unavailability of members from the South Wales team.

A belated welcome to Janet Adamson who has taken on the position of Membership Services Officer for the Association. Janet has already made several changes which should improve communication when dealing with new and existing members. The Section membership can play its part by informing her and myself as soon as possible of any change of address and/or particularly any new telephone number. On behalf of the Section we wish her every success in her new position.

Finally this year’s Christmas Tournament is to be held at Puckpool Hall Hotel and GC on December 14. Morning golf and Christmas lunch followed once again by a come and meet and it is hoped that we will create more laughs than last year.

Kevin Green
South Coast

Our next meeting is on December 5 at The Royal Winchester GC and is a Turkey Trot competition followed by an AGM. The South Coast v South West team match took place on October 5 but unfortunately no results were received. Can I ask the members to keep an eye on the AGM for results and reports on meetings and competitions.

Mid Anglia Section

All members should have, by now, received a fix- ture list for the remainder of the year.

Mid Wales

The washer women were busy on their course and many thanks to all who have contributed.

North Wales

I can say without any hesitation that a great day was had by all at our Autumn Meeting held at Chirk GC on 11th October 1995. George and his staff looked after us very well and many thanks to them. Mr Bill Williams and his staff at Mapledurham GC for the past three years. I look forward to a record turnout from you all. In the meantime, warm wishes for Christmas and the New Year.

Steve Antolik

Around the Green

The final of the Lodgeway Fourball Competition was held on Friday 6 October at Woburn Golf and Country Club. It was played over 36 holes, 18 on the Duke's Course and 18 on the Duchess. The finalists were Rupert Lawrence and Eddie Thompson from Berkshirestaf Golf Club, against Jon Moorhouse and John Wells of Brocket Hall GC. I joined the match at the start of the afternoon round on the Duchess Course with the two Johns two up. The match ebbed and flowed and was all square on the 16th. The 17th was won by Jon Moorhouse with an up and down from a bunker, for a par 3. By this time the weather had deteriorated to torrential rain and I did not envy the four players as they prepared for their tee shots at the 18th and final hole, with the match poised as it was.

Anyway, Jon and John managed to win the 18th as well and win 2 up. Congratulations to both teams for winning and to Eddie and Rupert, congratulations as well for making such a hotly contested final in such appalling conditions.

I am grateful to the following sponsors who made it possible to stage this competition: Bigga South Coast Section. All golf entries must be in 10 days before the competition.

Mid Anglia Section

All members should have, by now, received a fixture list for the remainder of the year.

Mid Wales

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Steve Antolik

B & O

Although you are reading this article some four weeks after the last golfing event the results will not be posted until December 1995 as they are currently being processed.

This is due to the deadline date for publication – I'm sure the suspense is killing you.

Due to lack of entries the Rigby Taylor Fourball is postponed until the next meeting. This will give all those who have not played yet a better time to play the event – longer days, better weather etc. All the people who did send their entries should be informed of the situation and cheque returned.

Events taking place in the near future are the Regional Seminar at Sketchley Grange on November 29 and the Turkey Trot at Firth Heath on December 4. Good luck to Locky Morrison on his move to Duinlach & Sydenham Hill GC. We wish him well. John Heap tells me he's doing work for a couple of courses in the area.

Congratulations to Paul Robson of Ryton GC who recently got married. Also I hear that Barry Wilson of Stockfield GC is also tying the knot in November.

Jimmy Richardson

Greenkeeper International November 1995
The Club Mechanic is becoming an increasingly important member of a staff at golf clubs

How many clubs rely on a mechanically minded greenkeeper to get a machine back on the fairway when it falters? As often happens, the result of his efforts is your man covered from head to foot in axle grease and the machine still immobile. The dealer would then be called and “a man who can” despatched to administer whatever assistance was required.

All this time the stricken machine would lie idle, an unsightly reminder of an important job not completed.

Nowadays many clubs are “insuring” themselves against such a scenario by employing their own mechanics and it is a policy which looks to pay dividends.

One such course is Greetham Valley, near Oakham in Rutland, where Steve Randall has recently taken up the post of Club Mechanic in charge of the club’s £200,000 worth of equipment.

“It is brilliant. Having a mechanic gives you so much peace of mind. You can relax knowing that when you turn the key it will start. It’s great having Steve about,” said Adrian Porter, Head Greenkeeper.

“We have such a lot of machinery it is easier to have an on site mechanic to keep it maintained so that it all runs smoothly. It keeps cost to a minimum because you don’t have the yearly expenditure of expensive mechanics.

“Normally if something broke down on the course you just had to leave it, ring up and get mechanics out. It wasn’t always the case that the mechanic could come out that day.

“There have been cases that they could come out in an hour or bring you another machine but it could be a day or even two days to come out.”

Steve (46) worked for a main Toro dealer in Leicester before taking the job at Greetham Valley.

“I had been with them for nine years as a mechanic working on all Toro greens machines. I gave it a lot of thought before joining a golf club but decided I would like to get out there in the field,” explained Steve.

“I was the other side of the story, going out to golf clubs to repair machinery. I found the clubs were getting young chaps to learn mechanics on these golf courses which is a slow process so we were losing work with clubs doing their own.”

It could be an expensive business for a golf club which tries to take short cuts instead of using qualified people.

“On numerous occasions we would find that people had tried to do the jobs themselves. I remember one particular time where it cost the club nearly £2,000 to put it right because someone had put something together incorrectly. If that happened on two or three different jobs over the year it would be very costly.”

Like all good mechanics Steve doesn’t just sit in his workshop waiting for a machine to start playing up.

“I’m a big believer in preventative maintenance. If a bearing is even thinking about...