

# Cirencester Golf Club

GOLF has been played at Cirencester for almost a century, and the present course at Baunton commands truly magnificent views of this lovely part of rural England. The course was designed by James Braid on a rolling plateau where the eastern slopes of the Cotswolds descend to meet the plain.

The holes at the southern end of the plateau overlook an expanse of pleasant wooded countryside stretching as far as the great plain of Wessex. The course has occupied its present site since 1909, and so rapidly did the construction work progress that the club was able to hold its first competition in July of that same year.

David Parker, head greenkeeper at the club, is a greenkeeping enthusiast who likes to keep his course well groomed for members and visitors alike. David said, "I have always liked an outdoor life, having had a spell in farming and forestry before taking up golf course maintenance, and I've never regretted my decision to make greenkeeping my career.

"The Cirencester course, like many others around here, has its own particular character and qualities that make it attractive. We are in good playing condition all the year round, irrespective of the weather, but being on an exposed Cotswold plateau there are days when the elements can test the playing abilities of all golfers. The weather is normally mild in the spring and bracing in the summer. The course is at its best in the autumn and tough going in the winter."

David went on: "The preservation of wild life habitat and flora is an important concession we make to the environment of the course. Using selective weedkillers puts a special responsibility on us to treat particular areas with caution and protect certain flora and fauna to preserve the delicate balance of nature.



"The activities of rooks can be a bit of a problem, and I expect this is something that quite a few greenkeepers have to contend with. In our case the birds come from the woods nearby and pull out newly replaced divots on the fairways in search of food. It makes the place look untidy as well as leaving nasty lies for fairway shots, and gives us extra work. It would be interesting to hear how other greenkeepers deal

with the bird menace - apart from shooting them!

"Having many sloping fairways calls for machinery with good traction and power to negotiate steep banks to get the maintenance work done with a minimum of effort.

"Drainage is good, even under the wettest conditions and it is always possible to use our equipment without the worry of getting bogged down or 'tracking up' the turf.



David Parker with his enthusiastic greenkeeping team



Desmond Jones, Cirencester's club secretary, discusses course alterations with David Parker, head greenkeeper, while the club professional looks on.

"Use of a Verti-drain machine has done a good job for us at Cirencester. Deep penetration with the tines has helped to relieve sub-surface compaction. This has been of great benefit to greens during the winter and early spring - colour, resilience and putting quality is really good.

"We also use the Sisis Hydromain for slit-tining on a regular basis. This has proved to be a good investment and we are pleased with its performance and results. Aeration is an essential operation if you want to maintain the kind of putting surface that will keep golfers happy".

Said David: "The club has built excellent facilities for the upkeep of the course. There is

ample space in the main shed for staff quarters and all the equipment. A huge purpose-built compost and material storage building is also part of the complex and everything is centrally situated for easy access to all parts of the course. We are well equipped with all the latest machinery to keep the course in first class condition.

"We have carried out quite a bit of construction work in the past to improve the course by doing major alterations to surface levels on the 7th green and have enlarged the size of the 2nd green, making it a double-tiered putting surface in the process. At this moment in time we are laying out a new fairway for the 18th which will make it quite a spectacular finishing hole. This

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is all good construction experience to have under your belt and all the staff have enjoyed it.

"The club directors and members treat us exceedingly well, which makes for a happy relationship. I have an enthusiastic and hard working staff who are dedicated to serving the club and take pride in doing a good job. When I first started work here I had two men - now there are three and I also hope to have a young YTS lad join the team soon".

David continued, "I am interested in greenkeeper training. When I first started out in golf course work I decided to attend college and get some qualifications, and I passed City and Guilds Stage I and II in greenkeeping.

"All our staff are members of BIGGA, and although they have not as yet been to any events, we hope to organise ourselves in this direction. The Association is quite strong in the south west, but attendance tends to vary at meetings. Training and education is an important part of our profession and it is pleasing to see how BIGGA is gradually getting into its stride in this respect".

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## Information & Etiquette Signs



Ground Under Repair  
Please Replace Divots  
Please Repair Pitchmarks  
Please Keep Off the Grass



Next Tee (l. or r.)  
Trolleys this Way (l. or r.)  
150 yds. to centre of Green  
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