



# Beauty and The Bearwood

**W**ork has begun on what could turn out to be "one of the most beautiful golf courses to be developed this decade".

The 18-hole, par 72, Bearwood Lakes Golf Club will be constructed upon 200 acres of Bearwood College estate at Sindlesham near Wokingham. Built among some of the most attractive heath and woodland in the South of England, the course features an existing 40-acre lake and is scheduled to open for play in late spring/early summer of 1996, with greenkeepers being recruited from next autumn.

The course will consist of two loops of nine holes which will start and finish close to the clubhouse. Each loop is approximately 3,400 yards long and par 36. The course has been designed by Martin Hawtree and the clubhouse is being created by a local company, Izod Design of Wokingham.

Bearwood Lakes is the brainchild of hotelier and leisure and golf operator David Newling Ward, who lives near Henley. David will be chairman of the company which owns the club.

His fellow director and partner, Ray Wilson, is managing director of Southern Golf which has built golf courses in over 20 countries dur-

ing the past 20 years. The company has also been responsible for constructing many other recent prestigious projects, including The Wisley, The Oxfordshire and The Buckinghamshire.

Demand for membership of Bearwood Lakes is expected to be high, with a population of one million people living within 15 minutes driving time of the site, but initially the club owners are only making 100 founder member debentures available at £4,500 each.

"We are inviting golfers to make an initial and returnable deposit of just £1,500, with the balance payable in two additional instalments between now and the opening of the course in 1996," explained Mr Newling Ward. "There will also be a joining fee and annual membership charge."

The estate gardens and parkland are listed by English Heritage as Grade II, the second highest grading awarded to parks and gardens. Bearwood originally formed part of Windsor Forest, but in 1816 was sold to John Walter MP, then proprietor of The Times newspaper.

The mansion and park were gifted to the Royal Merchant Seaman's Foundation in 1919

and became the Royal Merchant Navy School. Now known as Bearwood College, it is a fee-paying boys boarding school with around 250 pupils.

"Because we have 200 acres of wonderful natural countryside available, every hole will not only provide for good golf but will also be scenically attractive," explained Mr Newling Ward. "In addition to the two main lakes there is also a reservoir."

"There are also wonderful redwood, oak, lime and chestnut trees as well as an overabundance of commercially planted pine which will need to be reduced for the benefit of the other types of tree. And at the right time of the year our display of rhododendrons will match anything to be seen at Wentworth."

English Heritage and local conservationists have already supported the development of a golf course on such an exceptionally natural site, and consultant ecologist Dr Anne-Marie Brennan has produced an environmental survey and management plan to benefit the 90 types of bird and nearly 200 species of plant, tree and fungi which inhabit the Bearwood site.

George Shiels is the consultant agronomist.