

Huxleys celebrate 50 years progress

More than 100 visitors representing golf clubs, local authorities, contract firms, schools, sports clubs, public and private parks, estates and gardens helped Huxleys celebrate its 50th Anniversary at Alresford Golf Club in June.

The day began with Managing Director, Paul Huxley, introducing his father, Edward, who founded the business in 1946. Paul went on to thank the company's many customers for their support over the years, pointing out that a number of those present had been associated with the firm for a quarter of a century or more.

"That in itself speaks volumes of the confidence and trust built up over the years between Huxleys and its customers," commented Paul Huxley. "Still wholly family-owned, the business was founded on the twin principles of straight dealing and good service, principles which hold true to this day."

He pointed out that Huxleys is one of very few companies within the turf machinery industry which has its own direct retail operation offering sales, service, parts support and local hire of the machines it manufactures and distributes throughout Britain and overseas. These facilities are available to professional customers located within a reasonable distance of Huxleys' New Alresford head office and its Scottish branch at Broxburn, West Lothian.

"Our retail operation helps provide a close understanding of cus-



In 1946 Huxleys sold the Allen Motor Scythe (top). Founder Ted Huxley, above, is pictured on the new all-hydraulic Teestar

tractors' needs while ensuring a fast and positive response to calls for assistance, service or repair," Paul Huxley explained. "Most of the machines developed and built by Huxleys over the years have benefited from the suggestions, comments and ideas of end users."

Following Paul Huxley's welcome and introductions came

product demonstrations and a hands-on opportunity to assess individual machines, followed by a golf competition in the afternoon. Ever popular, the golf attracted 80 entrants playing four ball matches around the attractive and immaculately-prepared Alresford course.

During the morning machinery demonstrations, Huxleys highlighted a number of its latest products. These included the quiet and exceptionally stable Teestar tees and surrounds mower, the remarkable Soil Reliever deep aerator and the Grainskeeper greens grooming brush, now suitable for use behind compact tractors and turf vehicles as well as fitting in place of the cutting units on most ride-on golf greens mowers.

Also demonstrated was the latest Turfblazer 1280 rotary mower equipped with 126in (3.2m) wide cutting deck, 61hp turbocharged diesel engine and four wheel drive option. This high performance machine features individually folded wing cutting units, enhancing work in confined areas and transport between different sites. Maximum transport width is just 70in (1.7m).

For those not playing golf, guided tours of Huxleys' manufacturing facility gave an insight into the teamwork involved in designing, developing, producing, demonstrating, supplying and supporting the wide range of professional grass and turf machinery carrying the Huxley name.

Mike hits his quarter century

A quarter of a century of loyal service has been reached by one of the South West and South Wales Region's most respected greenkeepers.

Mike Pike of Elfordleigh Hotel, Golf & Country Club joined the club in 1971 when he was only 22 years old. Since then Mike has nurtured and looked after Elfordleigh's popular course and has turned it into one of the very best kept in the region.

After 25 years of service Mike has some very firm ideas about how a golf course should be run: "The secret of a good golf course is allowing the Greenkeeper to run his own course. I've always had this freedom at Elfordleigh which is probably why I'm still here and why I'll be hopefully be here for another 25 years."

"The feedback I get from members and visitors who play the course is that they most appreciate a firm and true putting service and I've always had very good remarks made about mine which makes me and hopefully the members very proud."

Firm bought out

AM Russell, the 114 year old Edinburgh based Toro dealer, has been the subject of a successful management buy out led by new Managing Director Brian Goudie and Financial Director Joe Zawinski. The company which employs 33 people is the largest supplier of Toro equipment in Europe and has an annual turnover of £4 million.

Beware of those rays...

A reminder to outdoor workers – that they should be aware of the health dangers from excessive exposure of the skin to the sun – comes from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

Mindful of last year's heat-wave, a statement from the HSE points out that undue exposure of the skin to the sun should be avoided, particularly during the three or four hours around the middle of the day, and especially for those people who are more sensitive to the sun than others.

Senior HSE health policy official Mike Shepherd said: "Too much exposure of the skin to

sunlight can be damaging. It can prematurely age the skin, leaving it wrinkled and leathery, and increase the risk of developing skin cancer in later life. However, these adverse effects can be almost totally avoided by following the guidance contained in HSE's free leaflet, "Keep Your Top On" which includes simple advice on how to recognise skin types most at risk.

"It is important for outdoor workers to realise the possible dangers from the sun and to take sensible precautions to protect their health. These include shading the skin from direct

sunlight by wearing a long-sleeved top and also a wide-brimmed hat – the latter will be very effective in helping to shade the face, head and the back of the neck."

The leaflet supports HSE's current "Good Health is Good Business" publicity campaign, which aims to reduce the number of people who suffer ill health caused or made worse by work.

Copies of the leaflet can be obtained free from HSE Books PO Box 1999, Sudbury, Suffolk, CO10 6FS. Tel: 01787 881165 Fax: 01787 313995.

THE BIGGEST MISTAKE I'VE EVER MADE AND WOULD ADMIT TO IS:



"Asking advice from Ronnie Bunting, who's just over the hill from me at Kilmalcolm"
Gordon Kerr, Glendoch

not a science...

to any kind of keepers except scorekeepers.

The attitude of the typical US golfer is grass is grass. Dirt is dirt. Water is that stuff which has either red or yellow stakes around it. Environmentalists are people who do not play golf.

Everything I know about plants I learned as a schoolboy in the one and only botany course I ever had nerve enough to take. Surely I don't have to tell you experts that no matter what you call it, blue grass or bent, essentially all grass is identical. Like Gaul, it is divided into three parts: It has a root, a leaf and a section in between at the spot where the sky meets the soil, called a crown. Now that's about it. The rest is just saying the same thing over and over again.

How on earth can you keep grass FROM growing? My old aunt Minnie knows that if she scatters a little grass seed around in the bare spots and adds a little water now and then, she is going to get grass. If she adds a little fertiliser it will turn green and grow. And then Uncle George has to mow it. He knows that.

You can give these little plants Latin names if you want to, and you can mow back and forth until the fairways look like checker boards; but the fact remains that you guys are selling snake oil.

The above assessment is not universally true. I want to tell you about an exception to the rule, an American Course Superintendent (because it costs \$125 to play HIS course) by the name of Michael McBride, who for many years has been my personal friend. He is the best greenkeeper I ever met.

Mike is the head man at Muirfield Village Golf Club in Dublin, Ohio. You will recognise instantly that this is the US soil upon which, in 1987, the visiting team first won Mr Samuel Ryder's pretty little gold jug. We now share that honour with Oak Hill, in Rochester, New York, another of our very finest courses. Nevertheless, we at Muirfield Village were the first.

You haven't seen a well-kept golf course until you see Muirfield Village. Some of our grass may be "Bent", but it all stands upright, proudly and stately. Our bluegrass is not blue; it is green enough to make an Irishman homesick.

Botanically speaking, Muirfield Village never has up days or down days. Each day is more sensational than the last. It has to be that way, because if the place were to be visited by Jack Nicklaus, the founder, designer, builder and chief-taskmaster, on a day when it looked a little ragged, believe me heads would drop and roll like pine cones, and careers would come to a sad end. We are talking perfection here. Mr Nicklaus takes the golfing term "course management" seriously whether he is playing or surveying the scenery.

About Clayton C Hoskins

Born and lives in Ohio, Great-grandparents came to the US from Scotland and Derbyshire in the 1840s. Served in World War II as a carrier-based Navy pilot. Practiced law in Columbus, Ohio for nearly 40 years. Represented Jack Nicklaus and served as attorney and PGA Tour player-manager for several other prominent golfers.

Served as Honorary Co-chairman of the 1987 Ryder Cup matches conducted at his home club, Muirfield Village Golf Club. Loses money regularly with a 9.4 Handicap Index.

In 1974 attended classes at the University of St. Andrews.

When you look out across our fairways all you see is sparkle. If a bare spot should develop, due to bad seed or perhaps a "hole made by a greenkeeper..." (see 1996 Rules of Golf, R-25. You thought only burrowing animals made holes, didn't you?), then one of Mike McBride's 25 or more full-time assistants will speed to the spot and re-sod an acre or so around the blemish so it won't spread like a tumour.

The fact that Muirfield Village always is dressed in her finest, is attested to by the touring professionals, who year after year claim that it is the best conditioned course they play. Even a golf writer, and surely a golf writer can not be a ninny, wrote in his recent book that our greens are "fast, true and carefully maintained." This may be the only time in history that a golf writer ever saw anything at a golf course

which he liked. I probably could cite you kings who have said the same thing; but somehow or other quoting a golf writer gives me more satisfaction.

Now, get ready. Here comes the stinger. No doubt you are thinking to yourself that Mike McBride is a distinguished horticulturist or agronomist, or a famed botanist, or a renowned plant pathologist or maybe even God, himself. Surely he must be a farmer of some kind. He probably has more degrees than a thermometer in the middle of August. He probably eats grass for breakfast, and sleeps on a sack of weed killer. He probably named his oldest son John Deere.

No way. Michael McBride, the top dog at the best conditioned golf course in the US has just one college degree and it is a degree in (eat your heart out)... political science. He doesn't know any more about agriculture than Picasso knew about anatomy.

So there. I rest my case. Green-keeping is an art, not a science. You don't have to know anything about when to spread lime or how to scatter around those little plugs all over the place, in order to be a greenkeeper. You have to be a politician. You have to be a hail fellow well met, who can win the confidence of the owner, and at the same time keep from being killed by the members.

Mike McBride and the hundreds of other truly successful greenkeepers of the world learned years ago that there is no need to worry about such things as whether the soil is acidic. It may be, at least in spots where someone might have spilled a little bottle of hydrochloric acid or something; but so what? Clean it up, and forget it.

The important thing for a greenkeeper to keep in mind, if he ever expects to become a Course Superintendent is that if you can't win the votes of the golfers who play your course it doesn't matter whether you set aside enough wetlands or maintain enough rough to keep the rabbits happy.

Environmentalists do not rule the world. Politicians do. Spiking the greens the morning of a tournament may make sense if you listen to a soil expert; but a politi-

cian would never do it. Riding around all day on a tractor and looking for trouble is a waste of time. You should spend your time in the grille room, buttering up the members. After all, if they are down on you, it doesn't matter how well your grass is growing.

While I certainly have been fair to all of you, it occurs to me that I am being a little unfair to my friend, Mike McBride. He may read this, if enough of you send copies to him. I should not leave the impression that Mike doesn't do anything but glad-hand all day long.

He is the hardest working Course Superintendent I ever met. He has surrounded himself with well-informed experts in all phases of golf course maintenance. He has attended every seminar ever conducted by the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America, especially those convening in Hawaii and Las Vegas. He is a family man, a gentleman, a scholar and a pillar in our community.

If you send this article to Mike, be sure to include that last paragraph. It may be the only paragraph he will read. It will be the only one he will remember.

Now that I know there is such an organisation as British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association, my next visit to your country will have new meaning for me. I shall look out across your dazzling fairways and say to myself, "Wow, look what Mother Nature has accomplished with the help of my friends at Aldwark Manor."

THE BIGGEST MISTAKE I'VE EVER MADE AND WOULD ADMIT TO IS:



"Forgetting to reprogramme the irrigation system after testing it and having it come on at 11.30am and follow the golfers around the course."

Richard Whyman, Bude GC

The Pro-Tee artificial tees are not only useful for protecting the natural grass out on the course, they can also be used on the practice ground with adjustable levelling devices to recreate uphill or downhill lies

Artificial tee mats are not everyone's kettle of fish but with the popularity of the game now reaching an all time high, the need to protect the playing surfaces on well-used courses leaves many Course Managers and Head Greenkeepers with few alternatives.

For their part manufacturers of the temporary tees are doing their best to use both the latest techniques and materials to ensure that the substitute tees both protect the natural grass and are user-friendly.

Links Leisure

Judging by the number that can be seen around golf courses in both this country and abroad the PRO-TEE produced by Shropshire firm, Links Leisure, seems to be one of the most popular with both greens staff and golfers alike.

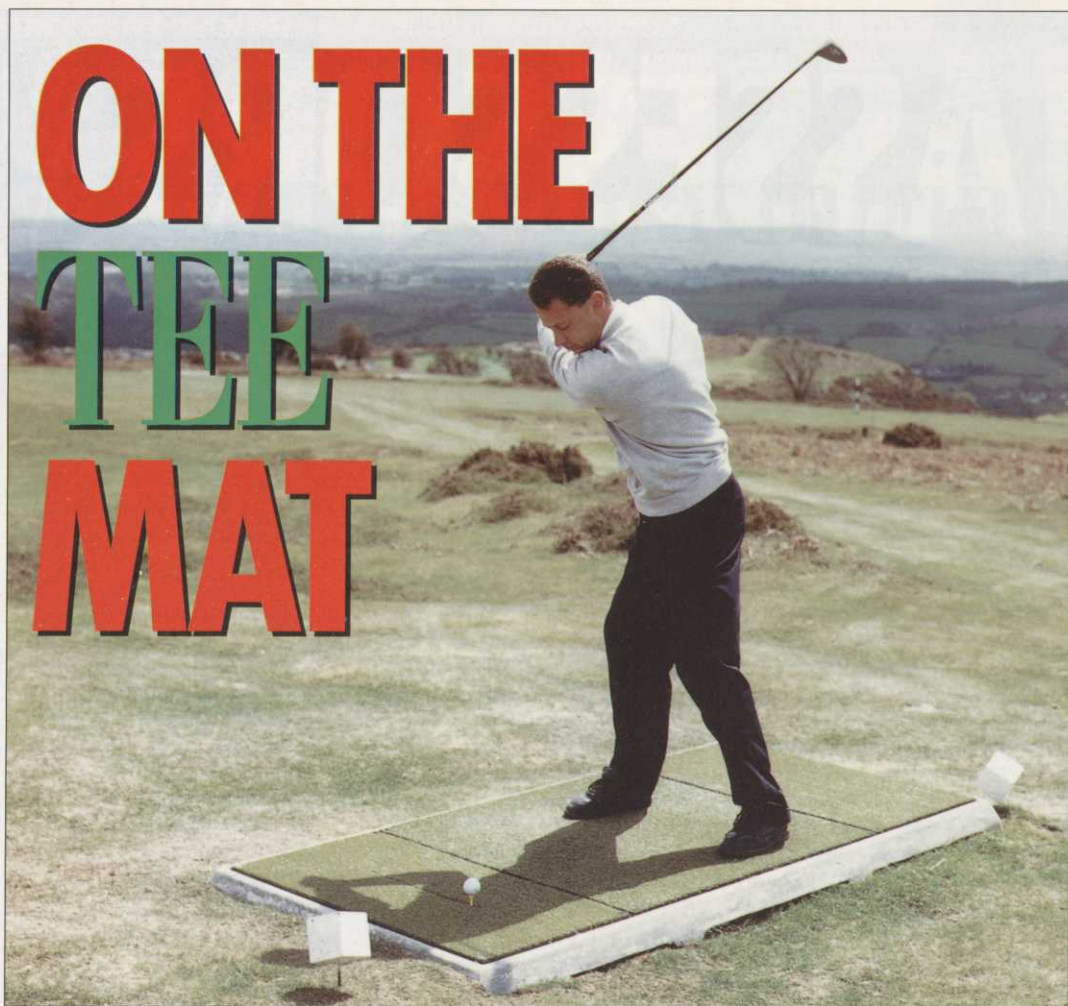
Developed with the intention of creating the near perfect substitute for the grass tee the PRO-TEE mat has found favour with many greenkeepers because it not only protects the natural grass tees from damage during times when they are most vulnerable, but also because it is useful as a temporary measure during maintenance or reseeding operations.

The PRO-TEE is also being used on practice grounds again to insure against unnecessary wear and tear.

From the golfer's point of view the PRO-TEE is extremely stable and its surface is said to be totally user-friendly both in terms of footing and club protection.

It comes in two sizes two metres by one metre and one and a half metres by one and a half metres and consists of a durable glass enforced cement base and three replaceable artificial turf sections.

The base sits proud of the surface on eight integral feet to protect the natural grass below. At the same time drainage holes in the base prevent the tee from becoming waterlogged. The three artificial turf sections used for the playing surface are suitable for right and left handed players and the surface includes a tee-peg retention system which will not clog up with broken tees. It also comes with optional easy to adjust levelling devices which as well as being used on uneven ground can be used to recreate uphill or down hill lies on prac-



tice grounds.

Currently the PRO-TEEs are being used on courses all over Europe and are finding favour at both ends of the golfing spectrum.

They have been used on all 18 holes of Sherdley Park municipal course in Lancashire for the last three years where 2000 rounds a week are played.

"It is almost impossible to maintain and sustain good quality natural grass tees on a course that is played as frequently as Sherdley Park," said Brian Collins, Outdoor Facilities Manager for St Helens Metropolitan Borough Council.

At the other end of the scale the PRO-TEE is also used at the Wentworth Club on the practice ground which takes quite a bit of a pounding.

"I can fully understand the problems faced by many greenkeepers. At Wentworth for example the practice tees are almost in constant use - especially in the summer and natural grass cannot sustain that sort of treatment," explained Course Manager Chris Kennedy.

Easy Picker

More and more golf clubs are using winter mats for the first time due to the stress on grass tees over the last few years.

But what type of mat do you buy?

Easy Picker manufacturers the widest range of mat sizes using a spike resistant surface in different top cloths, including a three piece tee mat situated on a two metre by one metre concrete base, allowing each section to be replaced to reduce overall costs. Also available is the versatile winter tee mat measuring one and a half metres by one and a half metres on a galvanised steel frame, complete with adjustable legs. Easy Picker will also advise on what type of mat best suits the clients needs and budget. The company can also manufacture a mat to fit inside the base on an existing mat.

Reinforced tee holes cut down on the time taken to remove broken tees and will last longer than having slits in the mat.

For further information on Easy Picker Tel: 01367 860122 and ask for Jo Cholmondeley.

GMUK

GMUK is the designer and supplier of the renowned Dunlop All weather mat which is now in its sixth year having had three upgrades - each time improving the design by listening to customers comments and requirements.

"The success of the product is its adaptability and also that every part of the mat is replaceable with the heavy duty tee

inserts costing only £29.99," said Peter McDowell, Managing Director of GMUK. "The Dunlop base retains a part exchange value enabling the customer to upgrade even after years of use."

The mat can be sited permanently with or without adjustable legs but most take the Dunlop WTI complete with detachable handles so the mat can be resited avoiding wear in the tee surrounding areas.

This season there are two new surfaces for our customers to choose from - a shot hit tee surface and a long pile stance mat to reduce slipping on frosty days.

A circular mat has also been designed for awkward tees where alignment on an oblong mat is difficult.

THE BIGGEST MISTAKE I'VE EVER MADE AND WOULD ADMIT TO IS:



"Becoming North West Section Secretary"
Bert Cross, North West Section Secretary

NEW PRODUCTS

Combidrive Ltd is now able to supply the American built SNPI range of forward/reverse transmission units. The gearboxes have been manufactured for over 50 years and currently are available in five sizes which cover the range 3 to 30HP. Ratings are based on four stroke diesel, petrol or gas engines and although the standard form comes with bare shaft and foot mounting, some models can be prepared for direct connection by SAE flange and coupling to an engine.

Forward, neutral and reverse are achieved by moving a lever through 30 degree steps. There is no possibility of "crashing" the gears as all wheels are in constant mesh. The change in direction is effected by applying one brake band and releasing another on an epicyclic gear train and can be done without any hesitation to speak of. It is claimed that "frequency of gear changing is unlimited".

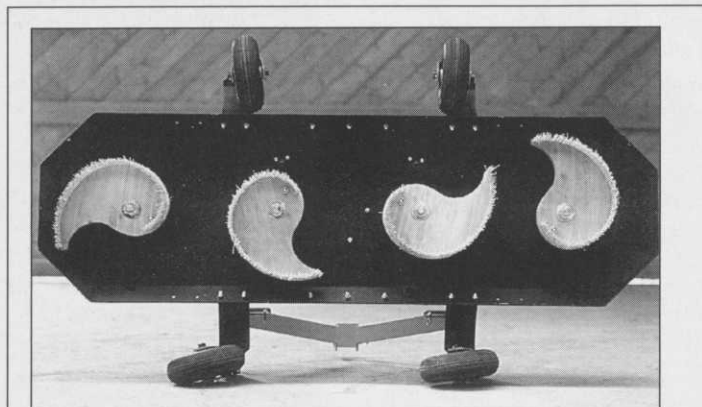
Each transmission also embodies a reduction gear of approx 3:1 in both forward and reverse.

The design is said to be compact, robust, simple in construction and easily field serviceable.

Information: 01558 823757.

From gardens to golf courses and rockeries to racetracks, Watermation has a new range of gear drive sprinklers to suit the job. This extensive new range which covers everything from small shrub heads to long range turf sprinklers suitable for sports grounds and golf courses have various options such as turf top, high speed and high pop on many models.

Watermation has always provided reliable, high quality irrigation equipment and this new range is certainly no exception. All the sprinklers in the range can be used as full or part circle operation by simple, visual arc adjustment, without using any key. They are vandal resistant, so that should the arc be forced outside of its pre-set position, the memory arc will return to its original pattern after only one turn. The entire gear drive range have exceptionally good sealing tops to keep out sand and a thick rubber cover to minimise damage



Looking from the top the Verti-Brush can look much like any other system for incorporating top dressings into fine turf.

However, when viewed from underneath – as our picture shows – the discerning greenkeeper can see the unique "tear-drop" system which has been perfected for its special sweeping action. The gentle brushing action causes the top dressing to be moved both in a rotary and in a lateral way at the same time. This gives the sand the maximum movement and opens up the turf to receive the top dressing.

As David Jenkins, Managing Director of Charterhouse Turf Machinery Ltd., said, "you have to see the top and bottom of the Verti-Brush in order to appreciate its full benefit."

Information: 01428 661222.

from mowers.

Watermation's impact drive sprinklers are in use world-wide and with the introduction of the new gear drive range customers expressing a preference for gear drive sprinklers will have a real choice.

Information: 01252 336838.

Lempro has added pressure controlled variations of its established 'Sprayrider' range of ATV sprayers, pictured below. This allows operators to control the pressure of spray to suit the job in hand, the conditions and the spraying speed. These variants are available on the 100 litre Sprayrider models and give operators total control over the pressure of the spray. The new units are designated SR1 OOP (with 8002 pump) and SR1 03P (with 8003 pump) and are suit-



able for spraying widths from one to four metres. An additional feature of the SR1 OOP is the re-circulation of chemicals achieved through the pressure regulator which provides some agitation.

The tanks on the new sprayers are manufactured from a high grade UV stabilised polyethylene and feature a low centre of gravity design which, when combined with an internal anti-surge baffle, enables their safe use on difficult terrain.

A left to right balance pipe enables the pump to draw liquid from either side and also allows the tank to be totally evacuated of chemicals.

Information: 01953 605151.

Turfmech Machinery has added a new higher velocity, tractor-mounted blower to its three model Tornado range of leaf, litter and debris blowers.

Known as the TM360 XL, the latest model is three-point linkage mounted and suitable for tractors of at least 40hp. It has been introduced in response to requests from customers wanting even greater air speeds and volumes to shift heavy, damp and stubborn material further distances.

Ideal for work in wide, open spaces such as parks, sports stadiums, golf courses, airfields

and landscaped sites, the machine has a 505mm (20in) deep fan housing, boosting significantly the rate, volume and breadth of air discharged from its delivery outlet. The high air flow moves more material further while extended exposure to the blast helps shift those really stubborn, sticky and damp materials.

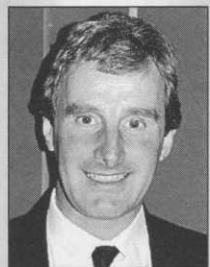


Supported by two height-adjustable castor wheels, the Tornado TM360 XL can be set to produce an air blast up to 128mm (5in) above the ground to suit the depth and quantity of debris to be moved. Twin skids are welded to the base of the fan housing and there is an anti-scalp roller to prevent scuffing over uneven surfaces.

At almost twice that of the powerful TM360 model, the air volume produced by the TM360 XL will be of major assistance to professional users having to clear-up large quantities of leaves, litter, grass, twigs, hollow cores, small stones and so on. Price is £2,950.

Information: 01889 271503.

THE BIGGEST MISTAKE I'VE EVER MADE AND WOULD ADMIT TO IS:



"Confronting a fourball which had played to a green before the group in front had finished and seeing 'Cleveland Constabulary' on the back of their sweatshirts.

One of them was in the traffic division, too!"

Ian Holoran, Middlesbrough Municipal Golf Centre

This year is the diamond anniversary of the Midland Section and Scott MacCallum meets up with a Greenkeeper who was there from Day One

It only seems like yesterday

In March 1936 25 year-old Reg Pugh was one of 30 greenkeepers who attended a meeting in the Hope and Anchor Hotel in Edmond St, Birmingham, with a view to forming the Midland Section.

Sixty years on Reg's recollections of the meeting are as if it were only yesterday.

"It was Chaired by Mr E.G. Hawtree and our first President was Carl Bretherton, first Chairman was George Hart of Gay Hill – coincidentally the course at which current National Chairman Dean Cleaver is Course Manager – and the first Secretary was Ernest Collingwood of Sandwell Park," says Reg, without recourse to records or diaries.

"I'm the last remaining of the original members who formed the Midland Section. It's a shame really. Where the meeting was held doesn't exist either any more because of the restoration of Birmingham. There's a place called Fletcher's Wharf where it used to be."

The Midland Section was the second section in the country to be formed, following on from the Southern Section, but was the first to allow assistants to play in tournaments. It grew quickly to the extent that there were over 100 members by the early 40s.

"Initially the main purpose of the Section was to hold and run golf events but education became a part of the Section in the mid 50s. We were going to make a presentation to F.G. Hawtree for services to the Association but it was decided that we should form the Apprentice Scheme for green-

keepers as a tribute to him instead," explained Reg who was Midland Secretary and Competition Secretary for 20 years and who is still now Senior Vice President of the National Public Courses Association for England.

Reg's memory stretches back to the days when horses pulled carts around the golf course and the special shoes they wore to prevent them digging up the turf.

"When I first started work I used a scythe and a sickle and we only had one push mower to cut the greens. Someone cut nine in the morning and someone else cut the other nine in the afternoon – everything else was horse drawn triples.

"Equipment wise there is no comparison now. If people had told me years ago that someone would sit on a machine to mow a green I wouldn't have believed them.

"The greenkeeping profession has come on leaps and bounds. I think it's marvellous. There is a huge number of people involved in it now whereas before we were working in isolation."

As a reminder of the uncertain nature of the profession he can recall an incident at Halesowen Golf Club.

"I had the misfortune to break a mower when I was crossing a brook – one of the cast iron sockets at the front snapped – and I lost my job because of it."

An excellent golfer he played to scratch or one for 15 years from 1939 and was still playing to seven when he finally gave up three years ago, regularly beating his age comfortably.



"I was noted as a long hitter. When I was in the RAF police in the war I was able to play free at Royal Lytham and I can remember driving the green at the 16th and another occasion when, because of a hard frost and the ground was so firm I hit the clubhouse wall from the tee at the 18th.

"I didn't play county golf because I was a member of a municipal course. If you didn't have a wallet they didn't want to know," he says matter of factly.

Reg was also Head Greenkeeper at Sandwell when the first tournament to have a first prize of £1000 was played in Britain.

"It was won by Peter Butler who was born and brought up in these parts," said Reg who lives in Warley in the West Midlands.

The aftermath of that tournament saw the end of Reg's greenkeeping career.

"It rained all that week and I had to go back at the end of the day in the tractor and tow cars out of the car park. I got wetter and wetter, caught pleurisy for a year and had to retire from ill health."

After a lifetime in the industry Reg has some advice for the greenkeepers of today.

"Their first and major thought should be for the turf. I had to

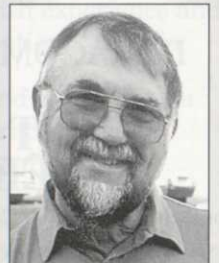
find all my own formulas for dressing, changing sulphurs to get the correct mixtures etc.

"I could write you a formula to mix on your own lawn, I don't care where you live, and you'd be tripping over the grass in a fortnight. It is no trouble to me to get grass to grow."

Looking back at his career and the progress since that meeting in March 1936 Reg has no regrets about his career.

"I've had a wonderful life in greenkeeping and it's remarkable the amount of change that's happened in the job."

THE BIGGEST MISTAKE I'VE EVER MADE AND WOULD ADMIT TO IS:



"Coming into greenkeeping too late in life because I've had more happiness in the last 10 years than I had in the previous 37"

Peter Biscoe, retired