

Environment competition winner nets £5,000

As reported in last month's magazine Rudding Park, in only its first full year as an operating golf course, clinched the Amazone Golf Environment Competition. Mark MacKanes, Managing Director of the golf course received the £5,000 first prize from Rod Baker, Managing Director of Amazone Ground Care at a presentation at Rudding Park last month.

Other winners in the competi-

tion this year were as follows: Northern Region: Rudding Park Golf - Winner; Catterick GC - Highly Commended.

Midlands Region: Lindrick GC - Winner; Arscott GC - Highly Commended.

Southern Region: Liphook GC - Winner; Wilderness GC - Highly Commended.

Western Region: Manor House GC - Winner; Burnham and Berrow - Highly Commended

Wales: Cwmrhydneuadd GC - Winner

Eastern Region: Old Nene G&CC - Winner

Scotland: Linlithgow GC - Winner; Newtonmore GC and Royal Dornoch GC both Highly Commended.

● BIGGA's Executive Director, Neil Thomas, happened to play Cwmrhydneuadd the week after the presentation and can vouch for its excellence.



Six information boards have been erected at Rudding Park, covering aspects of their flora and fauna

Optimism for 'great' jobs on golf courses

Great job opportunities still exist on golf courses in spite of the continued march of mechanisation. That's the optimistic view of Walter Woods, former links supervisor at St Andrews Links.

Speaking at Scottish Grass Machinery's turfgrass seminar held at Gleneagles, Walter pointed out that much had changed during his lifetime in the industry.

"People now expect to be able to play golf all year round and in all weathers, creating major difficulties with compaction and course wear and tear," he said. "Although specialist machines are now available to help combat the problem, they are becoming increasingly complicated to set up, use and maintain. The ever growing sophistication of equipment virtually demands the full-time employment of a trained and dedicated engineer to look after it.

"There is also a requirement for qualified irrigation technicians to help look after pumps, control systems and the associated water delivery systems. There must be a fortune in materials buried underground."

Walter pointed out that it was

20 years since the various authorities had recognised that greenkeeper education would have to be a priority if the standard of golf club management and maintenance was to move forward.

"I was fortunate that my position at St Andrews allowed me to bring young trainees onto the links to further their training," he commented. "Our mission was helped greatly by colleges such as Elmwood, the greenkeepers' associations and the golf unions, who helped promote the need for education to be extended beyond a basic first year."

Such has been the march forward in technology and standards that greenkeepers today need to be assessed on a regular basis in both the practice and theory of their job. The more enlightened are now able to study to become supervisors and, if they are high fliers, can move on to an HND course which can lead to a golf course manager's position.

"There is a clear and growing demand for more advanced education and training," pointed out Mr Woods. "New courses continue to be built and these will be looking for advanced greenkeep-

ing skills and knowledge. At the same time, the older courses will have to sit up and take notice in order to compete with the growing challenge to provide the highest quality playing conditions throughout the year."

Walter predicted that the staffing levels on many private golf clubs will double over the next 10 to 20 years in order to provide the conditions that golfers want. As a result, greenkeeping career prospects look extremely good, with better pay and better conditions backed by a strong association which will help look after the interests and needs of all involved in the industry.

"I admit that I could not handle all the education nor the machinery that greenkeepers need today," stressed Mr Woods. "However, I believe that golf clubs are really starting to appreciate the value of their maintenance staff and their needs and problems. The educational opportunities are being put in place to help greenkeepers achieve perfection and I believe that many are well on the way to getting there.

"There will be a wide range of greenkeeping career opportunities in the years to come and I see no reason why they should not be grasped by young men and women alike."

Thanks from Don Hunt

Don, Liz and the girls would like to take this opportunity to thank all those friends who so kindly phoned or sent cards, letters, flowers or fruit during my recent illness. I apologise for not writing personally to all concerned but the strength of the support has been so great

it was impossible.

A big thank you to Bill and Carol Pile and Gordon and Marion Childs who visited me in Torbay hospital and kept me in touch.

See you soon on my usual route.
Don

(mis)adventures of Gordon the Greenkeeper

Faulty goods? Do you know your rights?

The **LEGAL HELPLINE** can advise you

Greenkeeper Members call the LEGAL HELP LINE for FREE advice
English Law: 01206 867775 Scottish Law: 0141 332 2887

Yet another benefit of **BIGGA** membership