



The presentation to the winners of the 1999 BIGGA Golf Environment Competition, in association with Amazone Groundcare and the Grass Roots Trading Company, was hosted by the National Winner – Temple Golf Club in Maidenhead. The club's pride in winning the competition for the first time was obvious, and they delighted in the opportunity to show off their course to the five regional winners who attended.

An environmental temple

The first part of the day was held at neighbouring Berkshire College where the guests were welcomed by John Lambert, Captain of Temple Golf Club, who was performing his first duty since taking over the role three days earlier.

He described just how pleased the club was with the award and added that a booklet celebrating 20th Century Temple had been held back from the printers to ensure that mention of the award could be made.

He then outlined the history of the club and its prestigious past - it was designed by Willie Park Jr, was owned by the Oppenheimer family and boasted Henry Cotton as its professional.

He also explained how it had fallen victim of the "Green is Great" mentality in the 70s and 80s before, thanks to the sterling work of Chairman of Green, Malcolm Peake, and Course Manager, Martin Gunn, the pendulum swung back and the course returned to its natural roots.

John was followed to the lectern by Bob Taylor and Jonathan Hart-Woods, of the STRI, and two of the competition judges.

Bob said that all of the entries deserved to win but that Temple did stand out for the level of commitment that was apparent and the amount of outreach to other golf clubs and conservation groups.

Jonathan admitted that coming from a conservation background he had been a little bit cynical about golf course ecology and that initially he had been embarrassed to talk to his fellow conservationists about the competition.

However, he is now a convert and gets indignant when others scoff about golf's contribution to conservation and found something at every club he visited to get excited about.

The other judge, Dr Keith Duff, Chief Scientist at English Nature, said that the golf industry should be braver about blowing its own trumpet about the good work that is done.

He ended by saying that nature conservation and golf do go together.

Martin Gunn then gave a talk on the conservation management that is carried out at Temple while Kevin

Hazelhurst, Course Manager at last year's winning course, Lindrick, spoke on the benefits winning the award had had for the club.

"For the last 10 years the club has been returning the course to its original architecture while improving it agronomically. This gives golfers at Temple the opportunity to enjoy the traditional British game of golf which is played along the ground as well as in the air, and is part of our golfing heritage.

"I cannot improve on a quote from the BIGGA Judge, Dr Keith Duff, of English Nature, who said, "Temple provides the elusive feel good factor (often intangibly) when you play a course which both challenges the skills of the golfer, and at the same time, inspires you with its setting," said Malcolm Peake, speaking before the presentation.

"Temple has long been associated with good environmental practice and it is fitting that the club should be the recipient of the main award in this the third year that BIGGA has run the competition," said BIGGA's National Chairman, Gordon Child.

"We are deeply indebted to Rod Baker, of Amazone, who inaugurated the competition five years ago and who

has continued to joint sponsor it for the last three years, and to The Grass Roots Trading

Company, who joined as a sponsor this year," said Gordon.

"As the founder of the Golf Environmental Competition it is particularly pleasing for me to see the interest in, and impact of, the event growing year on year. It is obvious from the standard of the entrants that the possibility for environmental enhancement of golf courses has struck a cord with greenkeepers and club committees and it is only fitting that their efforts be recognised and encouraged," said Rod Baker, Managing Director of Amazone.

"The achievement of Temple in securing first place in 1999 against this level of competition cannot be overestimated. To all those who have exercised the skill, dedication and sheer hard work necessary to produce results such as those at Temple and the other entrants I offer my sincere congratulations.

"To those preparing to enter the competition in 2000, a daunting standard has been set," added Rod.

"We are delighted that this influential and prestigious competition carries our name. The caring and environmental approach adopted by all the entrants at

present is undoubtedly the path every golf club will be taking in the future," said Jamie Bennett, Managing Director of Grass Roots.

After the formal morning presentations everyone moved on to Temple for lunch and a course walk or game of golf.

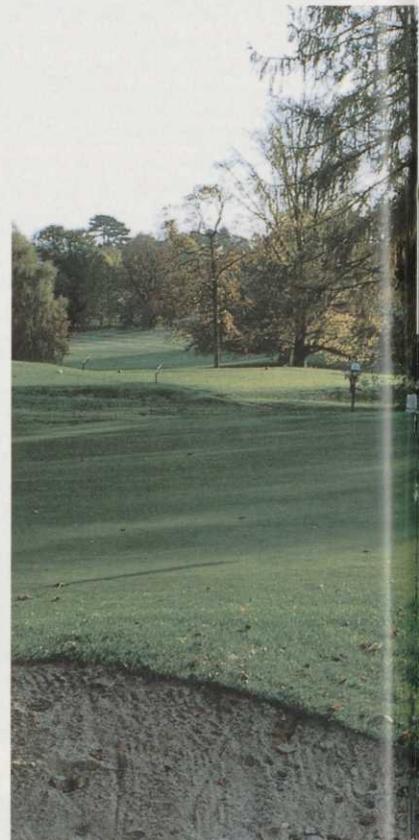
As winning golf club Temple receives a plaque, a trophy and a cheque for £5000 for use on environmental projects on the golf course.

Regional Winners

Scotland - Kilmacollm GC
North - Wilmslow GC
Midlands - Temple GC (National Winner)
South East - The Dyke GC
South West - Broadstone GC
Wales - Cardiff GC

Each Regional Winner receives a plaque and a cheque for £250

Below: Bob Taylor, Rod Baker, John Lambert, Gordon Child, Martin Gunn, Keith Duff and Jonathon Hart-Woods





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