

# Meeting 2002 Head On

With a new year comes renewed enthusiasm. My personal resolution is to take life by the scruff of the neck and make the most of 2002.

I've decided that after 30 years of playing at it I'm going to make a special effort to become a better golfer. I've already decided to take the first lessons I'll ever have had and seek professional help to turn my Heath Robinson swing into a thing of beauty. This should allow me to give full rein to my natural talent!

I started jogging a couple of years ago but in the last few months I've become a little less frequent so I'm going to rededicate myself to pounding the pavements. Health and fitness, that's what it's all about.

I started writing a book about 10 years ago and it's currently lying dormant on the computer somewhere. I tell myself that I write so many words each month for the magazine that I don't have any left for my own personal masterpiece, but that's just looking for excuses. In two year's time, whether it turns out good or bad - a Rowling or an Archer - I want it finished.

With the magazine, I want to give you, the readers, every opportunity of ensuring that what we produce each month is what you want. There is always room for a piece inspired by one of you and if you have an idea for an article please talk with me and between us we'll make sure it happens. You can either write it yourself and I tidy it up, recommend an expert you know who I can then approach to write it for us or I can interview you and do it that way. Whatever way, we'll get it done and you will get articles on the specific topics you want covered in the magazine. There shouldn't be barriers to achieving what we want, we just need the will to make it happen.

Sure, the downturn in the economy has affected the magazine. Fewer adverts have meant we have had fewer pages to devote to editorial features, but, with the power of positive thinking, we can ensure that we make best use of those pages. I also believe that the positive signs are there that companies will soon be looking to Greenkeeper International to publicise their wares once again.

Even writing this makes me feel uplifted and I'm sure that 2002 is going to be a year we look back on as being special.

So if all things go according to plan in the next 12 months I shall be a single figure, fitter, best selling, Editor of a magazine which is catering for every desire of its readership.

It's a goal I'm unlikely to achieve on all fronts, but in making special effort I'm sure I will move things forward a bit in each area.

Have a successful 2002.

**Scott MacCallum**  
Editor

## A First for Andy Campbell MG

Master Greenkeeper Andy Campbell, Course Manager at De Vere Carden Park, near Chester has become the first UK based greenkeeper to achieve GCSAA certification.

Andy achieved his Master Greenkeeper status in 1998 and decided to attempt the GCSAA certification route as his next educational challenge.

"I was looking for something which wouldn't tie me into the formal structure of university, as time away from work would have been difficult. The GCSAA route allowed me to work at my own pace in my own time... There was also a feeling that 10 or 11 American Superintendents had 'done it to us' by becoming Master Greenkeepers so I wanted to 'do it to them'," smiled Andy, who added that he got a lot of support from the American Master Greenkeepers.

The initial step proved to be one of the trickiest and that was having UK qualifications recognised by the GCSAA for education points and Ken Richardson, BIGGA's Education and Training Manager, was able to assist in this area.

He still needed to gain continuing educational points from the GCSAA and it meant him undertaking five correspondence courses, including the University of Guelph Turf Certificate programme before he was eligible to sit the six part exam but only after he successfully completed an inspection of his golf course operation.

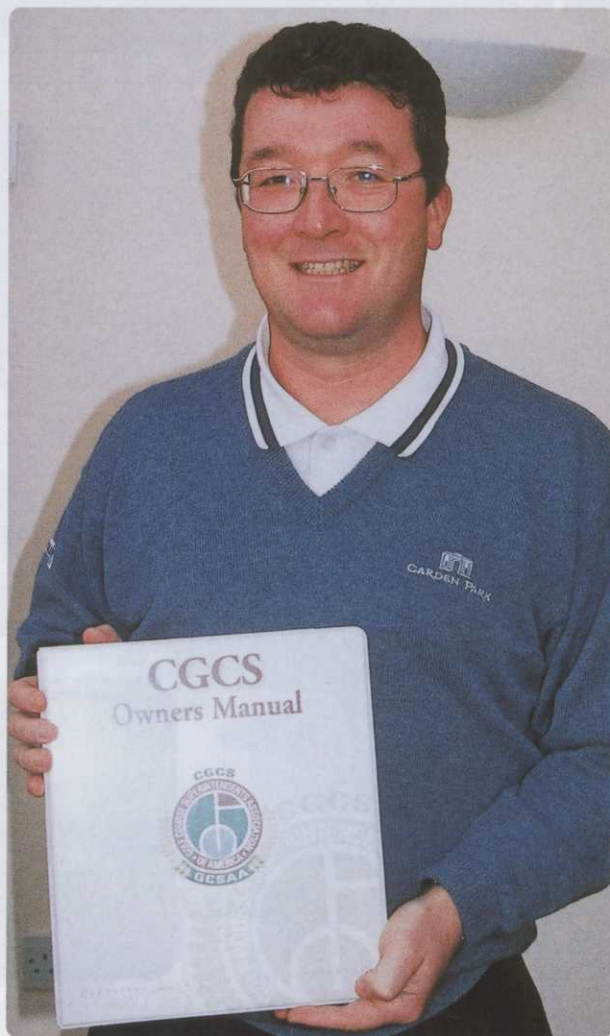
"Like MGC the exam is six hours long but unlike MGC it is open book and multiple choice. There are 300 questions which works out at an average of one minute and 15 seconds per question," explained Andy.

The difficulty for Andy, is similar to that faced by Americans facing the MGC exam, in that much of the content is alien.

"Obviously a lot of it was American and talked about warm season grasses, and American health and safety legislation which is totally different to what we face here. Also they use US Standard measures - the same as imperial - while we are metric. They also round up and round down and, although you are allowed a calculator, you must remember to do it otherwise your answers would be different."

Andy passed five of the six sections at the first attempt - no mean feat as 80% is required for each section - and actually got 92% on the Health and Safety section.

"I failed on the Turf Management, which was the broadest section of the lot. I got 69% the first time and 73% the second and it was on my third



attempt that I got 82% although I averaged 86% over the whole paper."

He is firmly of the belief that taking the certification has made him a better greenkeeper as it has helped to broaden his outlook.

"I'm a fairly confirmed Jim Arthur fan and I do think that's the way to go but there are situations where others have got answers which we haven't or another way of working."

"John Scott, the US Tour's agronomist who has become a great friend of mine, told me that I should be looking and questioning things more. Before I may have been a little bit narrow minded and focussed on one way, so in terms of thinking outside the box I think I'm a better greenkeeper," he explained.

"One thing it hasn't done is diminished his admiration for British greenkeepers."

"We're probably as good, if not better, than most when it comes to coping with a variety of conditions and dealing with the high expectations of golfers."

Like anyone who is a "first" the determination and commitment shown by Andy is quite remarkable.

"For the last six months, five

or six nights a week I studied from 9pm to 2am and when I was doing the correspondence course it was every night for nine weeks. The financial cost, in terms of books and seminars etc was considerable, shall we say," said Andy, who is now considering learning Spanish and also starting a BSc.

"I do have a high sense of achievement, in a pioneering sort of way, but that will be

wasted if others don't follow.

"However, I'd definitely recommend people going for the Master Greenkeeper first because you've got to acquaint yourself to the sort of exam pressures MG exposes you to without doing it all with another country's methods."

Andy will be presented with his certificate at the GCSAA Conference and Exhibition in Orlando by Walter Woods, who will be awarded the GCSAA's Old Tom Morris Award at the Conference.

"There was real pressure to retake the exam quickly as I knew Walter was going to be presenting the certificates this year. I admire Walter greatly and his receiving the Old Tom Morris Award is fantastic for British greenkeeping."