

# A Triumph for Persistence

Scott MacCallum witnessed Graeme MacDonald's fine win in the National Championship, sponsored by Ransomes Jacobsen, and wonders if credit should go to a famous spider.

Must of us, well those from north of the border, know the story of Robert the Bruce. Depressed, having lost another battle, and holed up in a cave somewhere, his eye was drawn to a spider attempting to weave a web. The poor spider got close a few times before it all fell apart, but eventually persistence earned its reward and the spider succeeded. Bob drew inspiration from this try, try and try again mentality, gathered up his broad sword, climbed aboard his horse once again, and went out and changed the course of Scottish history.

Although he has a Scottish name, I'm pretty sure Graeme MacDonald was more likely to have been thinking about Ransomes Jacobsen's new revolutionary remote controlled spider mower when he teed up at Alwoodley for the 2004 National Championship, sponsored by Ransomes Jacobsen, but having come close in the event so often he showed similar fortitude to Scotland's most famous spider to clinch a fine win.

A model of consistency, the Newark Golf Club Course Manager has won a host of club Championships in and around the Peterborough area, and had regularly collected prizes in the National Championship but the top one had always eluded him.

"I lost on countback to Chris Lomas at Coxmoor and Hollinwell last year so was determined to go one better this time," said a delighted Graeme, after he had been presented with the BIGGA Challenge Trophy.

"I've played in the National Championship for many years and, knowing the history of the event, it was always something I wanted to win. Having now done so, it just about tops anything else I've ever achieved on a golf course."

Graeme thought the course was awesome and certainly deserving of its reputation as one of the finest, and toughest, in the country, particularly as the two rounds were played in weather more conducive to kite flying.

"I didn't play too well on the opening day but played really well, ironically in the company of Chris Lomas, on the second day."

Rounds of 84 in extremely windy conditions and 75 off a handicap of 4, in only slightly weaker wind, just pulling him clear.

He opened his second round with a bogey and was actually two over after three holes but was a model of consistency after that with two birdies and three bogeys over the final 15 holes.

Royal County Down's Noel Crawford, had to settle for the BIGGA Challenge Cup after rounds of 78 and 75.

It was to be the third time that scratch man Noel has won the Cup,



Alwoodley proved to be a hospitable club, but a fiendishly difficult course.



Graeme MacDonald with the BIGGA Challenge Trophy.

having been best gross in 2000 at Fairhaven and St Annes Old Links and 2002, when he did the same at Hillside and Hesketh.

Noel, another regular attendee of the Championship, had a real scare on the second morning after his taxi got lost on the way to the course. He only just made it to the tee in time, having to play his opening drive in his street shoes to do it.

After such a sticky, or should it be slippery start, his round came alive with an eagle courtesy of a holed 60 yard chip on the 5<sup>th</sup>.

Phil Taylor, Alwoodley's excellent Course Manager, and his dedicated team had ensured the 76 competitors faced a genuine test of golf and the immaculately prepared course was as good, in condition and in layout, as any to have hosted the National Championship in recent times.

Next year's National Championship will be hosted by Sherwood Forest and Worksop Golf Clubs and will be played on Monday and Tuesday, October 3-4, 2005.





The overall winners from two days at Alwoodley.



Richard Andrews chips onto the 16th green on day two.



At least this ball was found.

**BIGGA National Championship sponsored by Ransomes Jacobsen Ltd**

**BIGGA National Champion (Best Nett Score)**  
**BIGGA Challenge Trophy – Graeme MacDonald, Newark GC, 151 Nett**

**BIGGA Scratch Champion**  
**BIGGA Challenge Cup - Noel Crawford, Royal County Down GC, 153**

**Gross 36 Holes**  
**Andrew Unwin, Rotherham GC, 160 (Better Second Round)**  
**Mike Hughes, Edgbaston GC, 160**

**Handicap 36 Holes**  
**Anthony Gerrard, Halifax GC, 155 Nett**  
**Dave Fellows, Coxmoor Woods GC, 156 Nett**

**1<sup>st</sup> Round**

**Scratch – 7**  
**Denis Tweddle, Turnberry Hotel, 75 Nett**

**8-15**  
**Matt Folka, Hawkstone Park, 76 Nett**

**16-28**  
**John Watts, Leeds Golf Centre, 83 Nett**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Round**

**Scratch – 7**  
**Eamonn Crawford, Royal County Down GC, 72 Nett**

**8-15**  
**Simon Woolley, Brickendon GC, 74 Nett**

**16-28**  
**Gary Crawford, Royal County Down GC, 73 Nett**

**Nearest the Pin (Day 1 only)**  
**David Beale, Orsett GC**

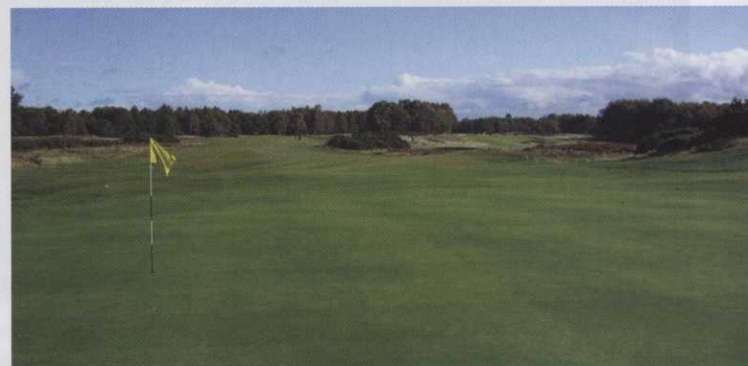
**Longest Drive (Day 1 only)**  
**Adam Newton, Fulford GC**

**Regional Trophy**  
**Midland Region**

**Richard Barker, Antony Bindley, Matt Folka, David Goodchild, Barry Holt, Mike Hughes, Graeme MacDonald and Simon Woolley, 641**

**South East Region**

**Richard Andrews, Don Clark, Philip Gerrard, Mark Henderson, Ian Semple, Chris Wells, Darren Woodward and David Badham, 643**



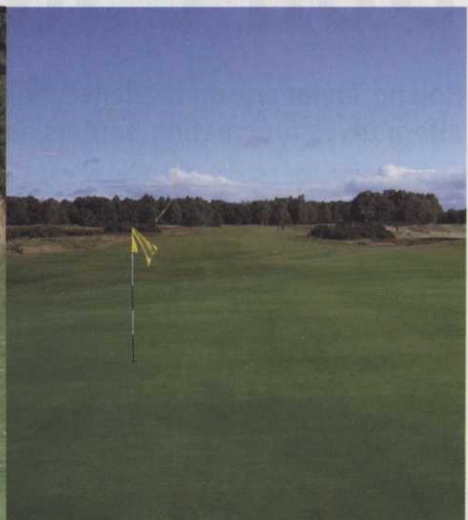




Chris Lomas, the defending champion, found it more difficult this time around.



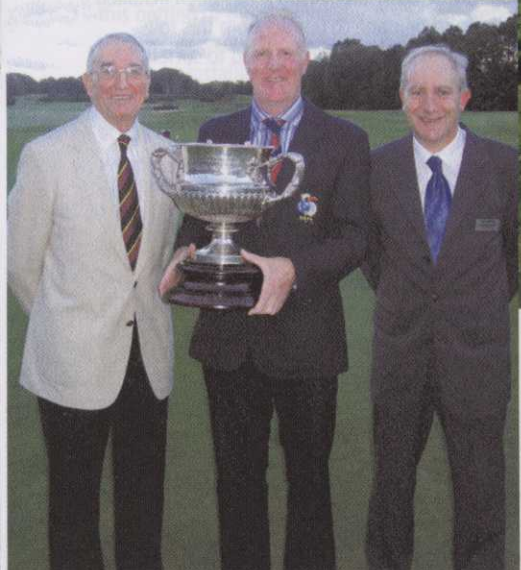
Played left handed the course was even more difficult.



The two Peters, Boyd and Larter, hard at work.



Graeme MacDonald found gold at the end of this particular rainbow.



Above: A player watches the result of his tricky up and down. Left: Winner Graeme MacDonald with the trophy presented by Club Captain Brian Mason (left) and Jim Whitton from sponsor Ransomes Jacobsen.



The South East Region collected the team prize.