

# that the championship provides a perfect base for camaraderie'



**Pictures, clockwise, from top left: Barry Heaney - Over 55's winner;**

**Mike Hughes - nearest the flag;**

**Paul Loffman - winner of the Maxwell Hart Trophy;**

**A winner's smile - Richard Barker;**

**Happy to be second - Peter Solski**

Local wags resident along the breezy English Channel coastline of Kent seem to take perverse delight in their particular brand of weather. 'One thing that can be relied upon', they say, 'is that it can never be relied upon: it's predictably unpredictable!'

Well, we didn't believe them on Sunday August 9, when a calm and sunny day gave practicing contenders for the BIGGA/ICI National Championships little cause for concern. Good scores came easily, balls flew prodigious distances, egos were massaged, hopes soared sky high. One contender went so far as to voice what others were merely thinking: "If it stays like this I'm gonna murder the little 'B'!"

Meanwhile, watching on the sidelines, Littlestone's talented course manager, Malcolm Grand, just smiled. There wasn't a scrap of malice in his knowing grin, but Malcolm always contended that Littlestone needed no trickery to sort the men from the boys: any little breeze that begins on the French coast as powder-puff gentleness can reach a fair rate of knots by the time it hits our shores - wind that makes pure links golf so utterly fascinating, so totally challenging and so damnably difficult!

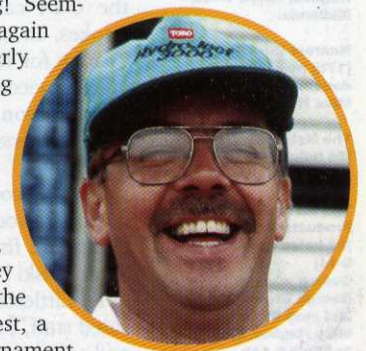
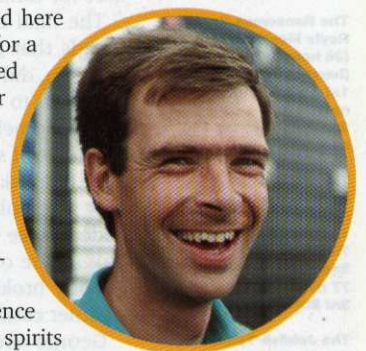
The tournament opened and the wind blew - not quite a gale but registering around 20mph on the club's wind speed indicator. It was enough to make scoring difficult and the game plan - for everyone - had to be 'keep the ball in play'. Though the fairways at Littlestone are generously wide, the rough is pretty rough to say the least and golfers ventured into the jungle at their peril - the highest individual 'lost ball' score on this pipe-opener was 13 - an omen, somebody quipped!

It is to the credit of our experts that many were indeed able to master the conditions, with greens that were deliciously accurate and made faster than they looked by drying winds. Whilst some left the 18th shaking their heads in dis-

belief, the good scores of the leaders (recorded here in nett form) gave indication that we were in for a grand battle. The course obviously suited Richard Barker, who gave notice of yet greater play to come by posting a 70, with a dark horse in the shape of Paul Corfield following closely on 71. There were still more who felt 'quietly confident' after having finished well and the hunt for a supreme champion, nay *champions*, was anything but a foregone conclusion.

The opening hole at Littlestone is a confidence booster. At 297yds it is a par 4 that gets the spirits surging, and to begin the second day, Bert Cross opened the proceedings by splitting the fairway. A modest, almost benign breeze was fluttering - but not for long! Seemingly within minutes the big blow was back, again recording a steady 20mph in a south westerly direction, the movement coming in swirling gusts. We were in for another of 'those days'.

From the pack came five handicapper Paul Loffman, scoring 71 to win the Maxwell Hart Trophy. This score, added to his previous 79 also placed him second in the 0-14 division for the 36 hole David Royle Memorial Trophy, beaten only by the skillful play of Andy Toomey who, with a total of 146, was four strokes to the good. That irrepressible campaigner Ted West, a player who has never missed a National Tournament, showed his worth with a splendid 73 (count-back) to place second in the Maxwell Hart, matched by another senior, Sheffield's Barry Heaney, whose 73 gave him a total of 165 and victory in the over 55s competition, decided over 36 holes. This seniors title was, as ever, a tightly contested fin-



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Tuesday - Mark Smith  
Weds - Roger Glazier

### The Fison's Bowl - Played on Monday:

1st - Richard Barker 74-4=70  
2nd - Paul Corfield 87-16=71  
3rd - Andy Toomey 82-9=73

### The Maxwell Hart Trophy - Played on Tuesday:

1st - Paul Loffman 76-5=71  
2nd - Edwin West 82-9=73 (on countback)  
3rd - Barry Heaney 81-8=73

### The Vitax Putting Trophy:

Winner with 33 putts - Simon Haynes

### Over 55s Award (36 holes)

Barry Heaney - 156 nett

### The Toro Trophy (low gross 36 holes)

Richard Barker 156

### The Pattison Trophy (36 Holes)

(Handicaps 15-28 inc.)  
1st Paul Corfield 145 nett  
2nd Peter Solski 157 nett

### The Ransomes David Royle Memorial Trophy (36 holes)

(handicaps 0-14 inc.)  
1st Andy Toomey 146 nett  
2nd Paul Loffman 150 nett

### The William Hargreaves (Sisis) Cup - Final Day:

1st George Brown 75 nett  
2nd Neil Whitaker 77 nett  
3rd Steve Wood 78 nett

### The Jubilee Team Trophy Winners, with a 54 hole nett score of 701:

Paul Loffman, Mike Hughes, Steve Wood - Midlands.

### Nearest the Pin (17th hole) (Award donated by Jim Fry)

Mike Hughes

### The Netlon Trophy (54 hole gross)

Winner - Richard Barker

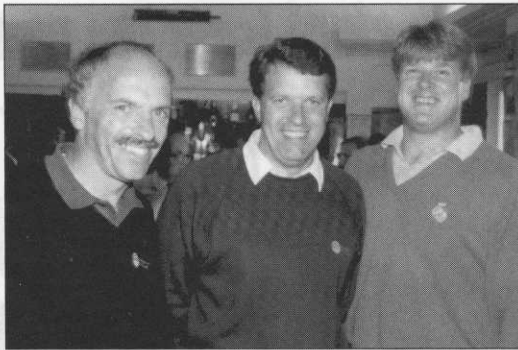
### The ICI Professional Products Trophy (54 holes nett/handicap 0-14)

Overall winner:  
George Brown 225  
2nd (hcp 0-14):  
Mike Hughes 231  
3rd (hcp 0-14):  
Paul Loffman 232

### The ICI Professional Products Trophy (54 holes nett/handicap 15-28)

1st Paul Corfield 231  
2nd Peter Solski 240

22 GREENKEEPER INTERNATIONAL September 1992



The ICI Professional Products Team and, left, the Midlands Team, receiving their prize from BIGGA Chairman, Roy Kates

ish with Gordon Payne just one stroke adrift in second place.

Meanwhile, having a second good day, Paul Corfield added a 74 to his total to take the Pattison Trophy (36 holes) by the comfortable margin of 12 strokes from Peter Solski.

For the 36 hole gross Toro Trophy, the ever dependable Richard Barker had been busily chipping away and in tough conditions recorded a creditable 78 to win by two strokes in a tightly contested battle. Just how close was the battle for the premier ICI Professional Products Trophy 54 hole award? Barker was leading by two at 148, with George Brown and Loffman tying second on 150 and Mike Hughes and Mike Sheehan both on 151 - a battle royal was brewing for the grand finale!

To their eternal credit, the field found sufficient energy (and enthusiasm) at the end of a tough day to compete for the Vitax Putting Trophy. It was won with just 33 delicate strokes by Simon Haynes.

It has all been said before, but the generosity of ICI and their many trade and business associates knows no bounds. It must be applauded. The banquet was a delight and the awards table positively groaned under a profusion of silverware. Fittingly, Malcolm Grand was presented by ICI's David Siddon with a special award, this in gratitude for his preparation of a course that could not be faulted. Competition may well be fierce, but it is beyond argument that the championship, its venue and the banquet provide a perfect base for camaraderie amongst peers - long may it continue.

The final day was a time for higher mathematics! Wind speeds that at times gusted to over 30mph, coupled with fine rain, did nothing to aid scoring and at times it was difficult even to maintain balance, leave alone make a graceful swing. Somehow it didn't seem to matter, for greenkeepers are made of sturdy stuff and the stalwarts battled on regardless. It speaks mountains for their ability to stick at it, for only seven players failed to complete all three rounds. As an added piece of useless statistical information, the average gross score of the field on the final day was 98 strokes and nobody broke 80. What does this prove? Simply that the weather conditions were appalling.

George Brown took 80 skillful blows (the day's lowest gross score) to clinch overall first prize - The ICI Professional Products Trophy - his nett 225 for three rounds in the 0-14 category beating Richard Barker by just two strokes. In addition, George won the William Hargreaves Trophy for low nett (75), Neil Whitaker and Steve Wood placing second and third respectively. Not to be outdone, Richard won the highly coveted low gross Netlon Trophy with runners-up in this class being Mike Hughes and Paul Loffman.

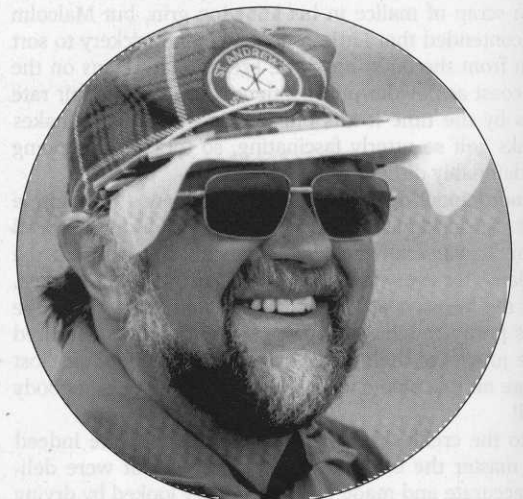
In the second division (15-28) the winner of the ICI Professional Products Trophy was Paul Corfield, who despite a nightmare final round succeeded in beating second placed Peter Solski by nine strokes!

To Littlestone Golf Club, Malcolm Grand and his dedicated staff, our generous sponsors ICI Professional Products, and to their many contributing colleagues, our most sincere gratitude. Safe in the knowledge that 1993 will bring a whole bevy of battling greenkeepers to Dunbar Golf Club, we hope we shall meet you all again. The BIGGA/ICI National is a great event, of which our Association has become exceedingly proud.

## 'The BIGGA/ICI National is a great event, of which our Association has become exceedingly proud'



Simon Haynes - a talent for putting



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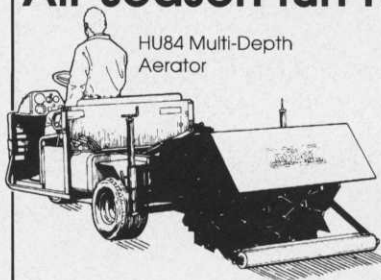
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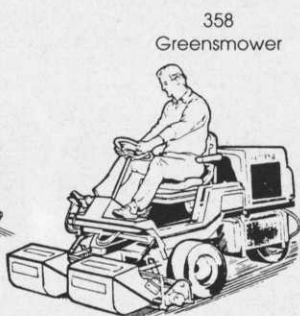
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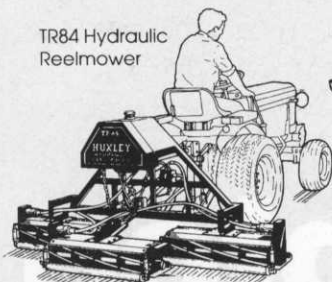
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The Club with the knack of picking winners plans its next success

# Golden future

Opinion suggests there are just three essentials in the building of any new golf course. They are, in order of priority, location, location and location! The good members of Minchinhampton Golf Club, whose ancestors made the first smart move in 1889 in forming a Club to play upon the immensely pleasurable Minchinhampton Common high in the Cotswolds, have every reason to be pleased in getting their priorities well sorted. Rightly so, for having tired of growing disruptions from an ever increasing motorised population, including week-end picnic parties that encroached upon bunkers and greens, they have mastered the art of moving house.

The old common is still in play and indeed continues to delight its many devotees, but for the greater number of Minchinhampton Golf Club's 1,400 members, home is now a mile or so from the common at the delightfully attractive setting of Avening. Here they have a Fred Hawtree designed layout of some 6,600 yards, construction of which began in 1972 and opened for play in 1975. It affords essential privacy, a fine test of golf and often breathtaking views that look toward three counties. It is high, wide and handsome.

Soon their pleasure is to be further increased, for plans have been approved for another 18 holes on adjacent land and construction will commence in 1993. Once again, constructors will be working to a detailed Hawtree design, though this time it is Martin Hawtree who is the architect, continuing proud family traditions that span four generations.

Moving house is never without trauma, but in one essen-

tial respect the Club have been blessed with true leviathans in the field of course management. They have the unique knack of picking winners, a skill which first began when they secured the services of Tom Lindsay, the younger half of a father and son team - Lin-Hire - responsible for constructing the course. It speaks volumes for the high regard that Tom earned as course manager, for upon his untimely death the Club erected a memorial in his honour.

Of the next incumbent, Laurence Pithie, there is little that has not been said or written. He was Britain's first Master Greenkeeper, is a writer and lecturer on turfgrass management, a skilled; meticulous and above all essentially practical exponent of the art of greenkeeping. It has been suggested that Pithie is a tough act to follow!

It is my firm belief that following tough acts present no problem for Minchinhampton's new course manager, 35 year old Paul Worster, who has only very recently taken over the reins following Laurence's move to Candover Holdings. Far from it, Paul has all the skills imaginable not to be overshadowed by his formidable predecessor. He is articulate, immensely skilled in greenkeeping technology and has the distinct bonus of having 18 years practical experience culled entirely in local conditions within the county of Gloucestershire.

Paul began in the time-honoured way as an apprentice greenkeeper at Cirencester, rising through the ranks to become deputy head after just four years. He joined Lilley Brook in 1982 and soon took over from then pro-greenkeeper Forbes Hadden as their head greenkeeper. Lilley

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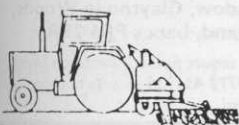
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## 'Being a golfer gives me a sympathetic insight into players' needs'

Brook under Paul's management was always the pride of Cheltenham and he now brings to Minchinhampton this same wealth of expertise, coupled with one unmistakable extra, a masterly touch with a golf club. Gloucester folk know him as a solid three handicapper and remember with affection his colt days when he was a force to be reckoned with in the Gloucester County Under 25s. There is little doubt he could have made the professional ranks as a player and he can certainly recall giddy moments (and a lower handicap) when contemporaries who are now touring pro's – the likes of Andrew Sherbourne and Gordon Brand Jnr. – often fell victim to his playing prowess. Further, Paul is the highly respected secretary of the BIGGA South West section, a burgeoning group of greenkeeping professionals that has grown from a mere handful to over 170 under his astute leadership.

In conversation with Paul I touched on the playing aspect of course management. "Being a golfer gives me a sympathetic insight into the needs of players" he declared, "a recognition of those often insignificant touches that make all the difference to the conclusion of a good round. One thing is certain, there will be few if any changes made with regard to the management regime instituted by Laurence, my job essentially will be a case of 'business as usual' in that respect, for what took place before was practical, sound husbandry. If anything, I guess my job will come down to a little fine-tuning, but even that will only come in the light of what I might find".

We talked about the differences between Lilley Brook, a course with a heavy clay subsoil, and that of Minchinhampton, which is constructed directly upon a carpet of Cotswold limestone. Paul explained: "to understand the principal differences, Lilley Brook is heavy in winter and comprises bent and *Poa annua*, whereas here water runs straight through to the limestone brash, which is like a blotting pad. The grass here is a mixture of fescue and *Poa annua*, for bent grass



does not grow well where a high pH (in the region of 7.5 – 8.00) prevails. You could say that greenkeeping at Minchinhampton is almost at subsistence level – a most careful and economical use of fertilisers – as it is so easy to tip the balance away from fescue and toward *Poa*. The greens were constructed with local sand and top soil and this is rather gritty in nature. This causes somewhat shallow rooting of both active species and as a result water is vital in maintaining growth. Perhaps one priority might be to improve our irrigation system- which appears to need upgrading – and certainly we need to increase water availability. We have a borehole, though this doesn't meet even current demand and thus we need more storage. When mains water is called-for to fill storage tanks it deprives the clubhouse, so in the main it's a non-starter.

Paul Worster, left, and the Minchinhampton team



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