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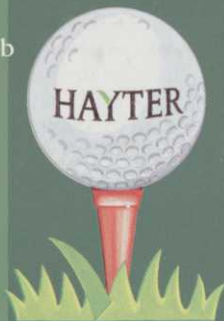
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Official publication of the  
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**JANUARY 1994**

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Aldwark Manor, Aldwark, Alne,  
York, North Yorkshire YO6 2NF

**ACTING EDITOR**

Tim Moat  
Tel: 0904 610611 • Fax: 0904 643074

**SALES AND MARKETING MANAGER**

Bill Lynch  
Tel/Fax: 091 413 7218

**SENIOR ADVERTISING SALES EXECUTIVE**

Carol Dutton  
Tel: 0347 838581 • Fax: 0347 838864

**SALES AND MARKETING ASSISTANT**

Louise Lunn  
Tel: 0347 838581 • Fax: 0347 838864

**PRINTING**

Hi-Tec Print, Unit 7, Universal Crescent,  
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Estate, Dinnington, South Yorkshire S31 7JJ  
Tel: 0909 568533 • Fax: 0909 568206

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Golf Greenkeepers Association

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Gordon Irvine, ICI Premier Greenkeeper of the Year, and very much the man of the moment

### Greenkeeper Education and Development Fund

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- EILEEN HAWTHORN,  
Publicity Manager, Watermaton

## Communication: making it work

**B**ack in November I took two sessions with delegates on years three and four of our annual Management Courses. Essentially these sessions were about our Association and in the form of open discussion. As a feedback from the 'grassroots', if you'll excuse the expression, these sessions were invaluable from my personal viewpoint and I hope of benefit to the delegates involved. One area of much discussion was the perennial subject of communication with the membership. There was a very definite emphasis on the need to communicate through the magazine, this quite rightly being seen as the prime means of communication. So the idea of this column was born from a concerted view of the delegates that I should write regularly in the magazine on matters of interest and concern to the membership as well as on future plans and developments. At the beginning of a new year there would seem no better time to start – so here goes!

Having begun on the subject of communication it would seem a good idea to continue with the theme in this first column. This is a subject where the Association is at all levels often prone to criticism. I do not think this is altogether surprising. Communication, to a greater or lesser degree, is a problem in all large organisations and one which must be constantly worked at through all levels of the Association to ensure that information is disseminated and understood and to see that the decision making processes work for the benefit of our members.

In the past communication with the membership was more difficult than it is now. It is often forgotten that it was as recently as 1987 that we operated from one small office within the Sports Turf Research Institute at Bingley. The Association employed just myself and Car-



**Neil Thomas, Executive Director of BIGGA, starts his new regular column**

oline and we continued that way for some eighteen months until David was appointed as Education Officer and Debbie took on membership services with Samantha replacing Caroline as my personal assistant. This coincided with our move in May of 1989 to Aldwark Manor. In those early days we were busy laying the solid foundations on which members and staff in partnership have built the progressive and professional Association we enjoy today. Let's be honest and say that in those early days with limited personnel and resources, whilst the importance of communication was always recognised it did not enjoy the priority it does today. I can well understand from those early days members criticising Headquarters over lack of communication, criticism which at times was justified and at others not so. It is a criticism which continues even now in varying degrees within the structure of our Association. In defence of Headquarters I really do believe that we have had a particular awareness of this problem area in

the past year and have done much to implement improvements. In this regard the continued development of our public relations function, long recognised as a neglected aspect of the Association's development, is surely contributing to improved communication.

The democratic structure of the Association from Board of Management through Regional Boards to Section Committees will continue to be utilised by Headquarters for the benefit of good communication but the point needs to be made that communication must be upwards as well as downwards from Aldwark Manor. That I regret is not always the case. Again I have spent much time in recent months with limited success to date in encouraging members with queries or concerns to communicate directly with Headquarters whether by letter, telephone or fax. Communication second and third hand can often be frustrating and counter-productive. Your staff are here to help and the systems are now in place to provide information and deal with problems promptly and efficiently. By all means complain if the level of service you are entitled to expect is not forthcoming. Our aim is to set high standards for the benefit of our members and where we are found wanting improvements will be made.

Constructive criticism of any kind is always welcomed in the interests of taking the Association forward. A valid criticism I feel is the need for staff at Headquarters to have more direct contact at 'grassroots' level and during 1994 our senior management team of Bill, John, Debbie and myself will seek to allocate more of our time 'out in the country' communicating directly with greenkeepers at all levels. It is also high time that we put faces to names and voices and in the coming months, through the pages of 'Greenkeeper International', we will be distinguishing between Sam and Sami and letting you know who your staff are and what they do.

I'll sign off this month with some words written over 400 years ago, but so true today – "The pleasure of criticising takes away from us the pleasure of being moved by some very fine things". Food for thought perhaps.



### BIGGA SUBSCRIPTION RATES FOR 1994

**PAY EARLY – AND PAY LESS!**

These are the prices to pay if you want to join BIGGA without linking your membership to the Education and Development Fund. To join the Fund, set up to help secure the future of greenkeeper, golf club and game, or for more information, complete the pre-paid card facing Page 62.

	New Members In 1994	Current Members if paying before 31 Jan. 94
Course Manager/Head Greenkeeper	£58.00	£52.00
Deputy Course Manager/ Deputy Head Greenkeeper	£50.00	£45.00
First Assistant/Assistant Greenkeeper	£43.00	£40.00
20 years of age or under	£29.00	£26.00
Associate/Company (including one year's subscription to 'Greenkeeper International')	£50.00	
Associate/Company without magazine	£25.00	
Corporate	£560.00	
International	£50.00	

### THE BIGGA RECOMMENDED MINIMUM SALARY/WAGE SCALE, 1994

The Association has updated its recommended minimum salary/wages scale, although actual figures remain the subject of negotiation between the Golf Club and Greenkeeping staff. Quoted rates apply from 1 January, 1994.

	18 Holes	27 Holes	36 Holes
<b>Course Manager/Head Greenkeeper</b>	<b>£18,550</b>	<b>£20,220</b>	<b>£22,630</b>
<b>Deputy Course Manager/Deputy Head Greenkeeper</b>	<b>£13,390</b>	<b>£14,590</b>	<b>£16,320</b>
<b>First Assistant</b>	<b>£222.80 pw</b>	<b>£222.80 pw</b>	<b>£222.80 pw</b>
<b>Assistant Greenkeeper</b>	<b>£209.60 pw</b>	<b>£209.60 pw</b>	<b>£209.60 pw</b>
<b>Apprentice Greenkeeper (all courses) Age 16/17: £104.80 pw; Age 18: £131.00 pw; Age 19: £157.20 pw; Age 20: £183.40 pw; Age 21+: £209.60 pw.</b>			

NB: Where appropriate these rates should be increased to reflect Regional variations up to a maximum of 24% in the South East Region.

The First Assistant is a post designed to recognise a third-in-charge where appropriate to the size of the Club. In cases where the First Assistant is the recognised Deputy, the appropriate Deputy Course Manager/Deputy Head Greenkeeper salary scale should apply.

Staff in possession of recognised qualifications should have this reflected in an addition to basic salary.



## Wild boar wreaks havoc

So you thought you had problems...

Believe it or not, this is the ninth green of the British Army's Sennelager Golf Club in Germany, where a wild boar has been leaving a trail of devastation.

The four-legged vandal has wreaked continued havoc for two months. Greenkeepers would spend several days putting right the damage, only for the boar to return with renewed vengeance. Each time the wild animal would escape, free to return and run riot again. The eighth green was repaired three times, before a decision was made to leave it until spring.

In desperation, head greenkeeper Colin Baxter enlisted the help of his pals in the Army gun club – but still the terminator with trotters managed to get away.

"I was on tablets to stop me having nightmares," Colin told Greenkeeper International. "When I told my doctor why I was so stressed, dreaming about pigs on my golf course, he just doubled up with laughter. He didn't realise I was being serious."

Colin took to walking alone in the nearby forest, trying to find the animal, or animals. "On reflection, I'm glad I didn't find any. Wild boars are powerful and dangerous and they eat anything. If disturbed they can cause serious injury."

Eventually, an electric fence was erected the full three and a half miles around the golf course and that seems to have solved the problem.

"Time will tell," says Colin, "The problem's been taking its toll on my staff and I really hope it's all over. One of my lads has been eating nothing but bacon sandwiches every meal time."

## Course work

The Elmwood College golf course has come under the scrutiny of Walter Woods BEM, course manager at St Andrews, and John Lindsey, golf manager of St Andrews Links Trust.

Walter and John were visiting Elmwood as advisors, helping the college to develop its greenkeeping courses. For Walter, the visit was part of a long liaison with Elmwood going back some 20 years and he says he is constantly rewarded by seeing former apprentices of the college working on major golf courses around the world.

Greenkeeping section head Carol Borthwick is pictured with John Lindsey, and Walter Woods, right, on the course.



## Developers seek action in Europe

Clearer guidelines for golf development in Europe, to meet the requirements of the growing environmental lobby, are being drawn up by a high powered team of industry professionals.

Management consultants, the Golf Course Wildlife Trust and representatives from all the game's major bodies, have met in a bid to tackle the frustration felt by developers unable to get projects off the ground.



## Kubota winner

Ewan Sturrock, newly appointed first assistant at the Buckinghamshire golf course, is the 1993 winner of the Kubota (UK) Cup.

Twenty seven year old Ewan is pictured collecting his prize

from Kubota's Russell Mellor, as best machinery student at Myerscough College. He gained a distinction on the three year full time National Diploma in Turf Science and Sports Ground Management course at the college.

He was nominated for the award because of his high degree of commitment. He also achieved top marks on his course.

## New venture for Hardi

Hardi have been appointed as sole distributor for Greencare International products in the UK and Europe.

Greencare are known in this country for their Coremaster 12 PTO driven, tractor mounted aerator and the Shattermaster sub-surface aerator.

The distributorship is a new venture for Hardi, a company well versed in the chemical application sector. It gives them the ability to provide the professional turfcare industry with a much wider product range.

"The addition of the expanding range of quality products can only strengthen Hardi in our commitment to the turfcare industry across Europe," said Colin Gregory, (pictured) Hardi's managing director.



■ **AS IF TO MARK** 25 years of Jack Nicklaus' career as a golf course designer, a record 12 of his courses have been ranked among the 1993 top 100 golf courses in the United States. Leading the list of Nicklaus courses is Muirfield Village in Ohio, ranked at number nine. Together with Robert Trent Jones and Donald Ross, Jack Nicklaus heads the list of designers with the most golf courses in the top 100.



■ **PETER WILSON** has joined Ransomes as Group Chief Executive. Recognising what he sees as "a tough challenge" ahead, Peter said: "I see one of my main tasks as not only defending our position within our existing market place, but also maximising the benefits by opening up new markets. I am confident that we do have something good at Ransomes to fight for."

■ **RICHARD NOBLE** has been appointed managing director of Maxicrop International. He was previously marketing manager with the Corby-based seaweed extract manufacturer.

■ **NEIL GRUNDON** has been appointed to the board of S Grundon (Waste) Ltd and S Grundon (Services) Ltd. He will have particular responsibility for aggregate extraction and land development. Neil, aged 24, has worked for Grundon for three years.



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## Greenkeeper wins fight to clear his name

*David Hinks, a highly skilled head greenkeeper with over 27 years experience in the art of fine turfgrass care, celebrated with champagne following successful action taken against Hayling Golf Club, his former employers, at a recent industrial tribunal. In publishing David's account of this miserable affair, he suggests it may serve to inspire other greenkeepers into action, especially those who feel they may have been dismissed summarily without good and proper cause. His account also serves to highlight the huge problems that can occur when those with scant knowledge, committee men in particular, get it into their collective heads to discount the advice of their head greenkeeper and perform as surrogate greenkeepers, plus swallowing as gospel every utterance issued by an outsider – an explosive double act.*



David Hinks and his wife Vicki: justice was upheld

and at the time, who did their best to bridge the rivers of animosity and belligerence that others chose to flood upon them.

"If all this was not enough, my dismissal was carried out with an apparent lack of knowledge for employment law and procedure; somewhat surprisingly, as the person set with carrying out this task practices in this field in a professional capacity.

"To summarise, Hayling members lose out because they do not have the course they deserve, plus bearing the not inconsiderable costs of seven years of what was (and remains), in my view, totally unsuitable agronomic advice. In addition, the poor club members bear all the legal costs accumulated in resolving my case.

"I lose out also, because I've had to wait nearly 15 months to clear my good name and reputation, thus making it nigh on impossible to secure another post. Additionally, a point that depresses me, any greenkeeper succeeding me is left with a terrible legacy, the last thing any thoughtful and caring greenkeeper would ever wish to enact.

"Since the beginning of this miserable chapter, with such a shadow hanging over my technical skills and ability, I have been restricted in choice of work and have become self-employed (still as a greenkeeper), involved in course construction and maintenance.

"Clearly, I could not have held out for so long had I not been a member of BIGGA, entitled to the excellent insurance cover that comes automatically with membership. Thus a very big vote of thanks to my friends, folk who supported my action, especially those who took the time and trouble to read my very detailed case history and who then prepared factual reports.

"In conclusion, a vote of thanks to my solicitor, who took on the case at short notice after my first attempt at gaining legal advice failed, and to my dear wife Vicki, for without her love and support I would have found it almost impossible to win through and see justice upheld."

■ *David Hinks took his case to industrial tribunal in March, claiming he was wrongfully dismissed. The hearing was adjourned until November 1, when the club avoided reappearing by offering a cash settlement of £7000. He was also offered an ex-gratia payment of £2700 when he was fired.*

### Concern over new turf standards

Turf growers Rolawn has joined the debate over turf accreditation and quality standards.

Terry Ryan, Rolawn's sales and marketing director, says he speaks from his company's position as Europe's largest turf producer in taking a firm stance to maintain high standards. "We want to ensure that any proposed standards are up to the highest levels of quality and not drawn so broadly that they become meaningless – and thereby self defeating – by letting the 'almost good enoughs' through," he said.

"Our principle concern is that we have no wish to see a fall in quality standards, which is a real possibility unless the utmost care is taken."

### Pesticides guide now available

The latest edition of the British Agrochemicals Association's Amenity Handbook – 'A Guide to the Selection and Use of Amenity Pesticides' is available now. The revised section on choosing pesticides helps managers to select the right pesticide for the job. The handbook includes a summary of legislation related to the use of amenity pesticides and explains some common pesticide terms. Advice on the careful and accurate application is also given, covering in particular calibration, storage and disposal. Free from BAA, 4 Lincoln Court, Lincoln Rd, Peterborough PE1 2RP. Tel: 0733 349225. If you'd like more info about amenity pesticides, talk to Patrick Goldsworthy.

### New man at GCSAA

The Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) has a new executive director. He is Steve Mona, aged 36, and he replaces John Schilling who has left to start his own business.



# National Education Conference

8-10 April 1994  
University of Warwick  
Warwickshire

For the sixth consecutive year, BIGGA's National Education Conference in the spring will feature a programme of international speakers. The Conference programme will be available on the BIGGA stand, C15, at the BTME.

## Topics and speakers are:

**Course Manager/Head Greenkeeper - What's In A Name?**  
Duncan McGilvray, Course Manager, Letchworth Golf Club

**Top Dressing Successfully**  
Professor Paul E Rieke, Department of Crop and Soil Science, Michigan State University, USA

**Everything You Will Ever Need To Know About Annual Meadow Grass Control**  
Kevin Munt, Course Manager, Buckinghamshire Golf Club

**The Role Of Higher Education In Greenkeeper Training**  
Nick Rigden, Head of Horticulture, Cannington College

**Looking At A Bad Year In A Good Light**  
David A Oatis, Director, Green Section, Northeastern Region, USGA

**The Restoration And Conservation Of A Links Golf Course**  
Philip Baldock, Head Greenkeeper, Royal Portrush Golf Club

**The Selection, Planting And Management Of Trees For Golf Courses**  
Dr Ian Campbell, Long Ashton Horticultural Consultants

**Where Does All The Money Go? - A Review Of Maintenance Costs At Collingtree Park**  
Peter Jones, Course Manager, Collingtree Park Golf Course

**Golf Course Management Now And In The Future**  
Joseph G Baidy CGCS, President, Golf Course Superintendents Association of America

**Soil Analysis: Why, How And What For?**  
Dr Bill A Adams, The University College of Wales, Aberystwyth

**The Ups And Downs Of A Mill Ride**  
Gordon Irvine MG, Course Manager, Mill Ride Golf Club

**Under Pressure**  
Barrie Gregson, Course Supervisor, Mottram Hall Hotel

**From Farmland To Golf Course In 1993**  
Alan Mitchell, Course Manager, The Hampshire Golf Club

**Fitting Cultivation Programs To Your Needs**  
Professor Paul E Rieke, Department of Crop and Soil Science, Michigan State University, USA

**Concept To Completion - A Case Study Of The Wisley Golf Club**  
David Whitaker MG, Course Manager, The Wisley Golf Club

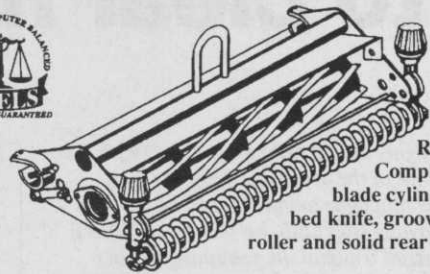
**Conservation And The Golf Course Working Together**  
Guy H Woods, Course Manager, Castle Combe Golf Club

**Winners And Losers: How US Turf Fared In 1993**  
David A Oatis, Director, Green Section, Northeastern Region, USGA

Copies of the programme and application form are also available from BIGGA HQ, Aldwark Manor, Aldwark, Aline, York, North Yorkshire YO6 2NF. Tel: 0347 838581 • Fax: 0347 838864

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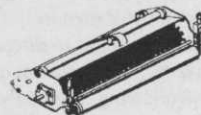
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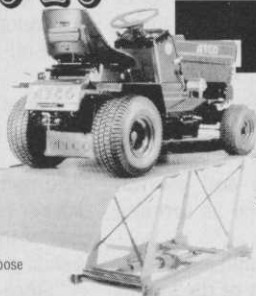
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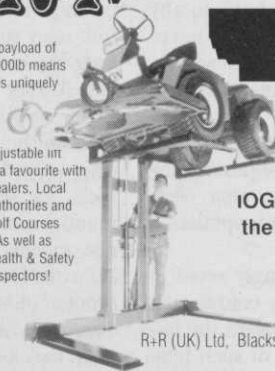
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# It's got to be Gordon

Tim Moat reports on a fitting end to a magnificent year for Gordon Irvine

**T**he new ICI Premier Greenkeeper is Gordon Irvine.

The award, acknowledged to be the most prestigious in greenkeeping, was a fitting end to a year of achievement for Gordon, course manager at Mill Ride Golf Club in Berkshire.

Last January, the 29 year old Scot became the youngest ever Master Greenkeeper. He was awarded his plaque by the Duke of York, who asked for his help in sorting out some troublesome private lawns. Two or three trips to the Duke's private residence and lengthy discussions on the art of fine turf maintenance gave Gordon a rare insight into royalty. It was also an opportunity for "a spot

## GREENKEEPER OF THE YEAR



Professional Products



of excellent public relations for BIGGA," he grinned.

Gordon's achievements continued in 1993 with the birth of his daughter, Samantha Louise and reached another high spot in elegant surroundings at Aldwark Manor

in December.

All in all, it was quite a year for Gordon Irvine. He has accomplished more than many greenkeepers could ever wish for and now the award of all awards – "Greenkeeper of the Year" – is also his.

It was the word "remarkable" that Roger Mossop, marketing manager of ICI Professional Products, used to sum up Gordon's talents when he handed over the prized plaque: "I hope this is a stepping stone to even greater things," he said at the awards ceremony, "and not a culmination. The 1993 ICI Premier Greenkeeper of the Year is Gordon Irvine, a man with a remarkable career in front of him..."



# 'To have reached even this far was achievement enough'

➔ Roger's speech, plus an impressive banquet, a spot of bowling and a social drink signified the end of a day when five of the country's finest greenkeepers came together for an occasion they will remember for the rest of their lives. To have reached even this far was achievement enough.

It was, as all judges hasten to add at these times, a hard decision to choose the winner from excellent candidates. In this, the fourth year of the competition, the five finalists had initially been nominated by their peers to become best of their individual BIGGA section, before regional finals went on to yield the famous five who made it to the final. "All candidates possessed the right characteristics and any one could have been the winner," said Roger Mossop who noted that 1993's entry had been the highest ever. The standard had been, he said, "exceptional."

The final hurdle in deciding just who would win the accolade which could be seen as a passport to greater things, was a 45 minute interview conducted by BIGGA's executive director Neil Thomas, BIGGA education sub-committee chairman Huw Parry, and the ICI Professional Products team of Roger Mossop and Richard Minton. Imagine the fear which grips contestants as they approach the spotlighted black chair in the BBC's "Mastermind" programme and, as one of the candidates explained later, that's just what it felt like as the call came for their own big moment.

The interviews themselves were not as onerous as imagined. Every effort was made for the proceedings to be informal but as Graham Wood – the eventual runner-up – pointed out, there was little getting away from the idea that this was like an interview for an important job.



Winners all: From left, Terry Huntley, Laughlan Millar, Tony Mears, Graham Wood and Gordon Irvine, with Richard Minton and Roger Mossop from ICI Professional Products

## Any one could have been the winner

"You're aware that you're dealing with people who really know what the game is all about," he said.

But it was an occasion none of the five would have missed. Laughlan Millar, who was eventually placed third, said he saw it as a "great honour" to be considered to be one of the top five greenkeepers in the country. From a family containing some 15 greenkeepers, it was more than section level honour at stake and Roger Mossop paid Laughlan great tribute as it was revealed that he was one of 11 nominees in his section.

Tony Mears, in the middle of studying two hours a day, five days a week for the Master Greenkeeper Certificate, said the encouragement he had received from his club had itself been very rewarding. "The letter was posted on the notice board," he said, "and the reaction was just great. People kept coming up to me to wish me all the best." The interview, said Tony, was "exhilarating."

Terry Huntley was full of praise for BIGGA and ICI Professional Products for giving greenkeepers a "real sense of purpose." He was proud of the life-long friends he had made through his membership

of the Association and was grateful for the way BIGGA continues to "push greenkeepers forward". Terry, course manager at Ashford Manor Golf Club in Middlesex, said there was a high level of interest in the competition at the club. "They're already cock a hoop I've come this far."

The day, however, belonged to Gordon Irvine who said before the result was announced: "Everybody has to set goals. The Master Greenkeeper Certificate was a private goal and I entered this award to recognise the greenkeeping team and the golf club as well."

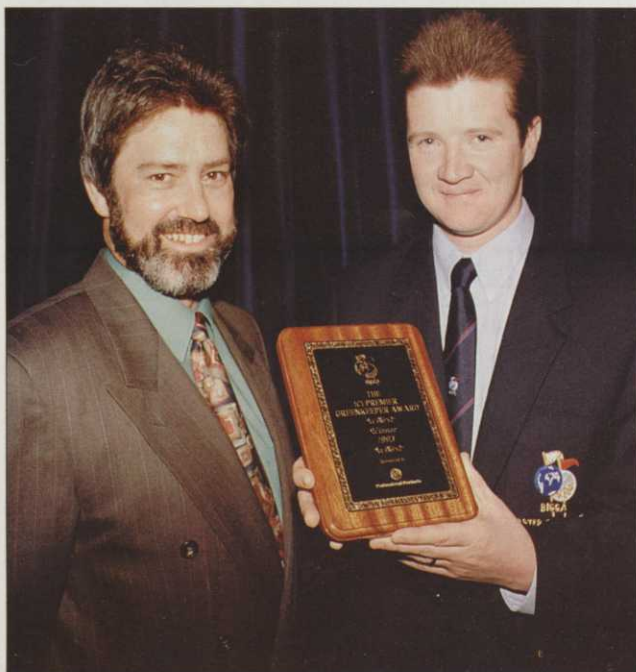
"I've got a lot of respect for ICI Professional Products. They're a very professional company and that came across in the interview."

"This award carries so much clout."

Gordon's pivotal role at Mill Ride Golf Club where he started as clerk of works in 1989 finally tipped the balance in his favour for the prestigious title. Gordon has had to cope with the affects of recession to help build the club and to give it a solid foundation on which to grow. "It was a great challenge to see it through," he said.

It was just the challenge necessary for the judges to see just who was to carry the banner high as ICI Premier Greenkeeper of the Year. "Gordon has made great strides at his club," Roger Mossop told the audience at the award ceremony. "He's done everything there plus he's found time for the Master Greenkeeper Certificate and he's an NVQ assessor."

In announcing that for the first time a Scot had won, a humorous voice with a north of the border accent finally broke any tension that may have remained when he piped up from the back, "You've got it right at last!"



Roger Mossop, Gordon Irvine and the "award which carries so much clout"