

Facing page: William Francis plays to the 4th green
Left: Getting into the swing of things - Barry Holt



The winners: from left, Mark Lewer, Kevin Yeoman, Paul Fildes, Barry Holt, Paul Loffman, Ray Wootton, Malcolm Lathan, Tony French and Bernard Emberley



Putting out on the 18th
Below, Don Major shows his injuries to a playing partner

Water course's ultimate test

REPORT AND PICTURES BY CHRIS BOILING

The water level of Dartmouth Golf and Country Club's lakes was distinctly higher following this year's ICI-sponsored BIGGA National Tournament.

There are two reasons for this:

1: It rained at some point on all three days, proving once again that if a greenkeeper wants rain he should organise a tournament. (Dartmouth Golf and Country Club had been dry for two and a half months prior to the event).

2: Greenkeepers find it easier to put the ball in a water hazard than in the cup.

The greenstaff at Dartmouth were expecting a golf ball bonanza following BIGGA's visit. Normally when they scoop the lakes they gather 200-300 balls, especially from the big lake on the long par 3 18th. Several hundred more are expected to be found next time out. From what I saw of the competition, the lakes on the 3rd, 4th and 5th were also popu-

lar targets among the 74 greenkeepers who entered this year's competition.

FIRST DAY

The competitors woke up to rain on Monday morning but it had cleared before the golfers set off on what many likened to a mountain trek. Two competitors failed to make the first tee. BIGGA vice-chairman Barry Heaney was nursing some broken ribs after falling off a wall while watering his prize-winning potatoes. Don Major was recovering from a fall down the steep bank leading from the second green to 3rd tee during practice day. He went to hospital with very badly bruised legs and hip.

Some of the older and wiser greenkeepers turned up on the first tee in a golf cart. Even Dartmouth's head greenkeeper, 29-year-old Terry Farkins, was spotted in one. The advantage of local knowledge? The pressure of hav-





BIGGA/ICI PROFESSIONAL PRODUCTS
NATIONAL
TOURNAMENT



From the turf to the baize: Ray Reardon takes on Huw Parry, Roger Willars and Richard Barker

ing 74 greenkeepers traipsing over your course? "No, a bad back after playing cricket at the weekend," he tried to convince us.

A glance at the leader board at the end of the day suggested otherwise, too. 12-handicapper Terry was lying in second place after a first round 85. In first place was fellow Devon greenkeeper Mark Lewer. The 21-year-old Dainton Park first assistant was the only person to better par. Ten-handicapper Mark, competing in his first National Tournament, shot an 81 for a nett 71. He was helped by an eagle at the par 5 16th – a driver, eight iron and 2ft putt. It was downwind, but Mark is a big hitter – he won the longest drive competition, too. This was cunningly set up on the first hole.

In our tournament preview, Terry Farkins had advised competitors not to get their drivers out until the sixth hole. Most ignored this advice on the first tee – and went out of bounds. Not just on day one, but also on days two and three.

Gordon Farrington shows great interest in his prize, presented by BIGGA chairman, John Millen



The best gross score was Barry Holt's 77. With a five-handicap, this gave the powerful little left-hander a nett score of 72. Most of the nett scores were in the high 70s and 80s but, with the wind, it was a day when many people were happy to break 100.

SECOND DAY

Visibility decreased to 25 yards and the Dartmouth mountain rescue team was put on alert as the first players completed the first few holes. Organisers Gordon Child and Richard Minton decided to delay the tee-off times, meaning it would only be possible to play nine holes today and 45 in total.

While they were waiting to go out, most players tried their luck in the Vitax putting competition. Three players went round the 18 holes in 33, but Bernie Emberley, the deputy head greenkeeper at Knighton Heath, near Bournemouth, took the title on the best last six. Graham MacDonald came second and Don Major, bruised but unbowed, marked his appearance on day 2 with a third place finish in the putting competition.

When the ICI competition got under way again, the 4th hole, which was a headache during construction by former Asprin salesman Ralph Hitchens, was proving a headache again – for the greenkeepers. I knew it was the problem hole when I heard single-figure handicap players claiming the honour on the 5th with 7s and 8s. On the first day local greenkeeper Craig Earnshaw had taken 16. Today 12-handicapper Jason Bean, deputy head greenkeeper at North Foreland, Kent, took 18 – and didn't lose a ball. Without this he would have had a brilliant score as his total for the other eight holes was 39.

The 4th also proved the undoing of overnight leader Mark Lewer. "I had major problems,"

he confessed. "I had a 12 after snap-hooking two out of bounds."

The best nett score was Tony French's 33 1/2. One shot behind was Paul Loffman, first assistant at Copt Heath near Solihull.

Best gross once again was Barry Holt's 36. Surely he was on his way to repeating his '91 triumph when he won the gross and was equal first in the best nett.

THIRD DAY

Barry Holt stood on the first tee 4.5 strokes ahead of the field. *Whack!* Out of bounds. *Whack!* Out of bounds. *Whack!* Out of bounds. He walked off the first green with a 10, and never recovered from that appalling start.

"It's one of those things that happens. That's golf," he said after signing for a final round 90.

This left the door open for one-handicapper Malcom Lathan who shot 78 on the first day, followed it up with a 38 and then recorded a final day 74, the best of the third day. It meant Malcolm, the head greenkeeper at Hexham in Northumberland, had successfully defended the Netlon Advanced Trophy he won last year at Dunbar. "I started badly with an out of bounds on the first and was beginning to slip backwards but then I hit a drive, 3-iron onto the green and sank a 35ft putt for an eagle on the 9th, and got two further birdies on back nine."

The competition for the main trophy of the event, the ICI Professional Products Trophy, was a close-fought thing between Mark Lewer and Paul Loffman. In the end Loffman, a frequent prize winner since he made his National Tournament debut in '92, collected the big one, the best 45-hole nett score. Dartmouth assistant greenkeeper Kevin Yeoman, competing in his first competition, won the best nett in the 15-28 handicap range.

The scores on the final day were generally a lot lower. Whether that was due to familiarity with the course or the lack of wind and only light showers on the final day, I'm not sure. But one great thing was that the drama



Dartmouth's Kevin Yeoman, right, receives his award from ICI's Roger Mossop



Paul Loffman with the ICI Professional Products Trophy for the best nett score



Mark Lewer:
It's been a
glorious
three days

continued right to the very end. The last shot from the 18th tee, the hole chosen for the nearest the pin competition, bounced on the road in front of the green and rolled up about six inches closer than the previous best effort by Steve Wood. As they say in football: "He wuz robbed." The robber was 2-handicapper Paul Sewell.

The Jubilee Cup team prize was won by Berks, Bucks and Oxon. Barry Holt, Ray Wootton and Tony French romping home as deserved winners.

Conclusion

No one can organise the weather, but the things that were organised were organised well. The entertainment arranged by Gordon and Marion Child was excellent. One night it was snooker ace Ray Reardon taking on and thrashing three greenkeepers followed by 20 minutes of superb trick shots; the previous

night there was roulette and blackjack with guests gambling £50 of fun money. One greenkeeper is obviously in the wrong business as he turned his £50 into £8,500. Shame it wasn't for real!

The Childs and the sponsors also put together a superb prize table with colour TVs, CD player, wall clocks, mantle clocks, radios and glassware.

Some of the golf was equally superb but there were a lot of scores that will encourage other greenkeepers to take part next year. The hospitality provided by Dartmouth Golf and Country Club was also excellent.

Having entered his first National Tournament, and done well, Terry Farkins is now considering entering next year's event. "It's a good three days and the people I've met this week, I've really enjoyed their company."

Unfortunately ICI Professional Products will no longer be sponsoring the event - they've changed their name to Zeneca.

Praise for Terry Farkins and his team was unanimous. Here are just some of the comments:

Mark Lewer said: "Terry has done a tremendous job in difficult circumstances. The greens are superb. It's been a glorious three days. You couldn't wish for better organisation, even with the weather. The course has held up well. It's hard but with this sort of tournament you've got to have something hard, it's no test going to a short course, you've got to have something tight."

Bernie Emberley said: "The course is very good, especially considering its age. It's a good test. I played poorly on Monday in the wind but I've played well since then. It's a course you've got to play positional golf and the reception we've had from the staff and everyone has been very, very good. It's a lovely place."

Paul Loffman: "I thought it was very challenging. I enjoyed it and I don't think it played as long as a lot of people thought but it played very tricky. I thought it was a super layout and I think in years to come it will be a tremendous

golf course. I'd come back again and play.

"I think everyone has enjoyed the week, it's been run superbly. I've certainly had a good time.

Terry Farkins himself said: "The course has been the best it ever has been. We've had two PGA events and we had compliments from them, now it's just far superior. We had some members early on saying 'Oh you're only doing all this because the greenkeepers are coming' but we always try to produce the best standard we can within the budget that we're working to and the machinery we've got available."

Devon Garden Machinery lent him a Toro fairway and a greens mower to prepare the course for the competition and all the lads worked hard on it.

"When you've got something good you want to show it off, I believe we've got something good here. Even if it wasn't in the condition it is now, it would still be good because of the layout. Anyone who appreciates good golf will appreciate the layout."

RESULTS

45 holes: ICI Professional Products Trophy for best nett (1-14) - Paul Loffman; 2, Edwin Walsh; 3, Mark Lewer; ICI Professional Products Trophy for best nett (15-28); Kevin Yeoman; 2, Paul Fildes; 3, Paul Corfield; Netlon Advanced Trophy for best gross - Malcolm Lathan

27 holes: David Royale Cup for best nett (1-14) - Paul Loffman; 2, Mark Lewer; Pattisson Trophy for best nett (15-28) - Kevin Yeoman; 2, Paul Corfield; Toro Trophy for best gross - Barry Holt; senior division (over 55) - Edwin Walsh

Jubilee Cup for best team - BB&O (B Holt, R Wootton, T French)

Monday: Fisons Bowl for best nett - Mark Lewer; 2, Terry Farkins; 3, Ray Wootton; best gross - Barry Holt

Tuesday: Standard Golf Trophy for best nett - Tony French; 2, Paul Loffman; 3, Graham MacDonald; best gross - Barry Holt

Wednesday: William Hargreaves 'Sisis' Trophy for best nett - Paul Fildes; 2, Bernard Emberley; 3, Steve Gallier; best gross - Malcolm Lathan

Longest drive: Monday - Mark Lewer; Tuesday - Paul Sewell; Wednesday - David Wood

Nearest the pin: Monday - Gordon Farrington; Tuesday - Dennis Jones; Wednesday - Paul Sewell

Vitax Putting Competition: 1, Bernard Emberley; 2, Graham MacDonald; 3, Don Major.

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It used to be 'wet, yellow and miserable' but now Surrey's Wildwood has a superlative sward. David White reports on the transformation.

Some folk collect postage stamps, others get their kicks by hoarding harmless little items like china pigs, cigar bands, or press cuttings relating to Princess Di. One eccentric I know even has a collection of several thousand used score card pencils!

Me? I collect golf courses. I'm well advanced now into the mid three hundreds, having hacked my way through a dozen different countries, harbouring ambitions now of at least making the magic four zero zero before being called to account to The Great Handicapper. Rich variety can make any golfer choosy and, since I've played my share of 'dogs' as well as delights, it certainly makes this golfer ultra-critical.

Recently an exceptional extra was added to the score with a tasty round played at one of Surrey's newest, though by no means rawest, parkland creations; the Hawtree designed, oh-so-natural-it-looks-as-though-it's-been-there-forever course at Wildwood, situated between Guildford and Horsham. Adding more than just an extra number to my total, Wildwood seemed to me a copy-book example of how an architect's skill, coupled with artistry from the man who nurtures and cajoles its acres into early maturity – plus a healthy belt of modern technology – can set a place apart. About that, more later.

I yield to none in my admiration for the golf courses of Surrey, a relatively small landlocked patch which offers as fine a selection of strategic park and heathland courses as anywhere inland, particularly as the place is a treasure trove of classics by the likes of Harry Colt, Willie Park, Tom Simpson and J F Abercromby. They were clever blighters, those ancient land artists, for they took what nature gave them; gently massaging the old girl's contours rather than pushing and shoving them around. Thus it was easy for this seasoned observer to see from which source Hawtree's had drawn inspiration in fashioning this latest creation at Wildwood. In an age when it is all too common for architects to out-do and



The taming of Wildwood

out-spend their contemporaries in attempting to create yet another self-styled 'championship' course – especially true of many American architects, where little thought appears to be given to construction or maintenance costs – there was never a greater need for natural enhancement than at Wildwood, whose rolling acres had previously echoed only

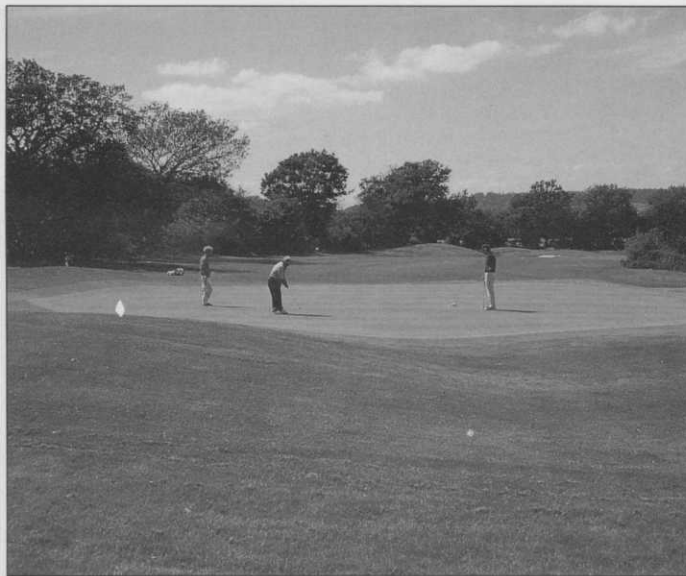
to the thunder of horses hooves. Top marks, then, for Wildwood's minimalist architecture.

While making a short list of first division architects whose work is prevalent in Surrey, it further occurred to me that the county has another claim to fame: it is the stamping ground of the most prolific family in golf today – bar none. Of course I

refer to the clan McMillan, the Surrey arm of which includes brothers Billy, Ian, Stewart, Bobby and Cameron, plus their illustrious father, Jack, now a consultant. Between them they hold something of a monopoly in managing currently or having managed in the past no less than ten per cent of all Surrey's courses. It must raise their status

still further for readers to learn that the McMillans are linked essentially with first division courses boasting first division architects.

The story began in 1990 when Jack was called upon to offer his expert advice during the formative stages of Wildwood's life. What he saw dismayed him, for much of the design and especially the construction was strictly non-kosher (in Jack's words, they were using rootzone material that would have been better used making cement). Jack was bold enough to opine that a complete un-doing and a return to the drawing board would be the club's only salvation. Courageously the owners agreed, though they knew it would be a painful and costly exercise, and thus Hawtree and Sons were called upon to remodel, re-design and in some cases relocate greens and tees, thus creating effectively a new golf course. Their model properly utilised the hitherto



untapped good of the land, while giving utmost attention to land drainage, consistency of quality materials and the following of USGA Green Section specifications for green construction.

Ask the experts; they'll tell you that the most critical time in a golf course's existence is during grow-in, that period of weaning and cajoling the infant into early maturity, at least to get it toddling.

Moving ahead to late 1992, we see Jack McMillan approaching Roger Mossop and David Siddon at the ICI (now Zeneca) Green-

keeper of the Year awards, propositioning them. "Wildwood's just a baby," he told them, "and in some ways it's bucking the old tradition, with USGA spec greens sown to bentgrass, but there's a hell of a lot going for it ...and my son Billy is the course manager, he's been in charge since the seed hit the ground." Enough said.

The idea was for the Zeneca team to take a look, see just how much they could contribute to the development of the infant golf course, a learning experience for both parties if you like and, in Jack's words, "a lovely exercise for Zeneca to put their products to the ultimate test, to show how good they were and to use Wildwood as a guinea-pig, a testing ground."

Forward now to February 1993. David Siddon explains: "We've always tested impeccably, we've seen our products through many tests with the STRI and other trialists and of course we've seen how well they perform on established courses, but we'd never before had the opportunity to go with a bentgrass/USGA spec from the very beginning, to use it for our own learning curve, to work one to one with a manager of Billy's standing and on a course of Wildwood's obvious potential. We have a similar experiment under way at Slaley Hall in Northumberland, and the idea of doing the same in the south excited us.

"What their soil analysts found," said Billy, "was a somewhat impoverished course (remember, the earth had been moved around twice or even three times, which alone creates problems), one that was wet, yellow and miserable." That stated, both David and Billy were excited by the project and they both agreed, notwithstanding the harsh winter that had not yet passed, that there was everything to 'go for' and at the same time

they would not forget that the course was - is - a commercial entity. "The object of the exercise," Billy exclaimed vehemently, "is always to keep the customer satisfied."

Elaborating, Billy explained that maintaining a tidy golf course was always his goal, an integral part of that being provision of good grass cover. In the beginning this desired cover was minimal, "So we must stimulate sufficient vigour, vigour we can use to present the course - what the client will not accept is no grass cover," he emphasised. "This urging process of stimulation is not something we'll be doing forever," he added, "once we've got a manageable sward we'll likely reduce fertiliser input, but it's important that we have something good to present."

So how did something wet, yellow and miserable become the superlative sward we find today? Soil tests from every green were taken for analysis (a free service offered by Zeneca), revealing pH readings averaging around 5.0 with 4.6 being the lowest. Not surprisingly, the findings suggested also that there was very little phosphate present, that potassium levels were low and magnesium levels were very low. Phosphorus, the analysts declared, was important for root growth and energy transfer level reactions within the soil, though it was acknowledged that high levels of P might encourage *Poa annua* and a small quantity only was recommended as a remedial treatment.

David and Billy studied the analyses long and hard, discussing the findings thoroughly, each reaching the same conclusion. Their jointly planned result was a one-off programme, a plan tailored exclusively for Wildwood incorporating 'Longlife' fertiliser, 'Longlife' Fine Turf Autumn Feed with higher K levels and small amounts of Mg (5:5:15). Additionally, all tees were treated with new 'Mini-Gold' granular (31:0:0) at 30 gm/m². Wildwood's nine hectares of fairways were declared acceptable in their nutrient levels, though extra grass cover was certainly called-for this spring, 'Mini-Gold' granular at 30gm/m² coming to the rescue with exceptional results. This was the start of a long-term



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Last year's Fair, the first Irish Turf Maintenance Exhibition, was such a huge success with both exhibitors and buyers, that the IGGA is running it again this year. With a wider range of exhibitors showing more products and services, this year's Fair already outstrips last year's.

For further information contact the organisers.

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'Longlife' programme.

Fast forward now to July '93, where further analyses revealed little variation, though with pH averaging a point lower. Nothing suggested deviation from the plan and a further course of 'Longlife' Fine Turf Autumn Feed was recommended – things were coming along very nicely; there were compliments flying. "The baby is thriving," said Billy, who was beginning to feel much more relaxed, his confidence boosted.

Explaining a few subtle points, he said: "When you look at the programme you'll see we used the whole range of Zeneca products. We used conventional fertilisers, some that will give eight weeks, through to the 'Mini-Gold' that will give 10-12 weeks nitrogen release, but we used a programmed approach and used also what is classed as an autumn fertiliser in the spring."

"If you look at what they are doing you'll see that they're using a variety of our products in an interesting but totally practical way," added Roger Mossop.

"Talking practicalities," David chips in, "it's all down to setting the base; the soil analyses we provide. We're doing nothing different at Wildwood than we might do at any golf course in the UK, and we're finding more and more course managers coming over to our programmed way of operating."

Those who talk of throwing tons of money at a course might well use Wildwood as a salutary example of how not to squander, rather than how to. Billy's budget is by no means in the loads of money bracket, far from it. It is

decreed commercial sense to spend minimally for maximum output. We all made mental calculations and arrived at a sum suggesting that what extra had been spent at this critical stage amounted to little more than the cost of, say, 25 green fees. Of far greater importance though, the extra outlay could be seen reflected in quality sward, in turn encouraging paying customers to return and negating any thought of excess.

Let Billy have the last word. "Never before in my life have I had greens that I can turn on and off like these, they're so predictable. If we have a major tournament, for example the Futures Pro Tour event which we staged in March, which came to us with just three weeks notice, I can tailor the programme to fine-tune them to any given day. I often use Ultra-Green between fertiliser applications and find it quite splendid in giving the greens a quick boost, indeed when I presented the course for the Futures professionals, albeit at such short notice, its prior use as a management tool proved invaluable – an absolute Godsend. We have exceptional Penneagle bentgrass greens, praised for having a truer roll, for being more predictable and smoother, all made possible by denser growth and finer blades. The Tour players, who above all others know what they want and what they like, compared them favourably with the best in the land." A clear case, as Billy had said earlier, of keeping the customer satisfied. You can't get much better than that.

The ICI/Zeneca solution at Wildwood

1993

March: Greens treated with Longlife (5:5:15) @ 35gm/m²

Tees treated with Mini-Gold (31:0:0) @ 30gm/m²

April: Greens treated with Mini-Gold (31:0:0) @ 30gm/m²

June: Greens treated with Longlife (15:0:5) @ 35gm/m²

Tees treated with Mini-Gold (31:0:0) @ 30gm/m²

September: Greens treated with Longlife (5:5:15) @ 35gm/m²

October: Greens treated with Longlife (15:0:5) @ 30gm/m²

In addition, Ultra-Green (N:P:K) was applied to greens/tees in April,

July and August @ 20kg/hectare

1994

March: Greens treated with Longlife (8:0:0) @ 35gm/m²

Tees treated with Mini-Gold (31:0:0) @ 30gm/m²

April: Greens treated with Longlife (5:5:15) @ 35gm/m²

Tees treated with Mini-Gold (31:0:0) @ 30gm/m²

May: Fairways treated with Mini-Gold (31:0:0) @ 30gm/m²

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All you have to do to stand a chance of winning one of THREE superb prizes is answer six questions. Two were published in the last issue, two appear here and the final two plus an entry form will be published in our October issue. When you have the answers to all six questions, complete the form and return it to us by October 30, 1994. Usual rules will apply.



MORE AND MORE new exhibitors are booking space at the 1995 BIGGA Turf Management Exhibition, Harrogate, January 25-27.

Firms set to make their debut include Risboro' Turf, Nature First, Landline and Pac Organic. A significant new addition signing up for the show that brings together everyone and every product concerned with fine turf is the Institute of Golf Course Architects.

They join more than 119 other exhibitors, many of whom are taking more space at the seventh BTME. Claymore Grass

Machinery, for example, has doubled the size of its stand. Other companies, including Ransomes, Hardi Sprayers, Sisis, Kings

Horticulture, and Outdoor Power Products, have increased the size of their stands following the tremendous success of the 1994 show.

Ninety per cent of the stand space at the Harrogate Exhibition Centre has now been sold.

"It's not just the fact that BTME attracts today's

and tomorrow's decision-makers, but the atmosphere is great for doing business," explains Louise Lunn, one of the organisers.

Even more greenkeepers, course managers, golf club secretaries, golf course architects and constructors are expected at next year's event because, for the first time, BIGGA is running its National Education Conference in Harrogate on the two days preceding the show.

This is in addition, of course, to the educational seminar programme which runs in conjunction with the exhibition. The extensive seminar programme includes a session by George Brown, golf course and estates manager at Turnberry on "The Open 1994". Also Dr James Beard, president of the International Sports Turf Institute, will speak about turf grass trends. These are just two examples of the learning opportunities on offer. For more details of the education programme, call Ken Richardson, BIGGA's education officer, on 0347 838581.

SEPTEMBER QUESTIONS

1. What is the name of the course manager at Turnberry who will be speaking at the seminar programme in 1995?
2. Which institute will be taking a stand at BTME '95 for the first time?

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HEAVEN



It's more than just a golf course: Donnington Grove exists to strengthen cultural links between Japan and Britain, as Chris Boiling reports from 'Parasampia'

All the stationery, leaflets and scorecards from Donnington Grove, the year-old course near Newbury, carry the word Parasampia. There is even talk about changing the parkland course's name to Parasampia which, in Sanskrit, means "distant heavenly place".

Parasampia is the word the golf course owners, Shi-tennoji International Limited, use to describe their activities.

Many British greenkeepers work for Japanese bosses, but David Winterton and his team of seven greenstaff must be the only ones who work for a company which started out as a Buddhist temple.

The Shi-tennoji Temple at Osaka is Japan's oldest temple. It was founded in 593

by Prince Shotoku, the father of Japanese Buddhism. Today Shi-tennoji also runs the International Buddhist University with campuses in Hawaii, Austria and Belgium, four old people's homes, a hospital, four homes for the physically and mentally handicapped, four nursery schools, a residential home for mothers and children, two high schools and a junior school. In England it owns a co-educational boarding school near Bury St Edmunds in Suffolk with the majority of pupils coming from Japan. One of the aims of the school is to increase cultural exchange between Japan and Britain.

The 18-hole 6,781-yard course, clubhouse and 27-bedroom hotel performs a similar role. "Important though the recreational

facilities are, Shi-tennoji, as a religious and cultural foundation, would not have embarked on this development were it not for the opportunities for cultural exchange," says the Reverend Zenro Morita. "As newcomers to this lovely part of England, we hope to establish many friendships between British and Japanese people, thus contributing to increased understanding and goodwill between our two great nations."

That's why, despite its appearance, it is not an exclusive club. There are 300 local members and "day members" pay just £15.

Base in cultural triangle

Shi-tennoji also run the Parasampia Travel Club whose members wanted somewhere to