

The results were as follows. Best Nett D. Clark; Best Gross, D. Kelso 2. Nett J. Fullagher; 2. Gross A. Pearson; 3. Nett G. Royden 3. Gross G. Elliot. The Trade and Guest winner was John Hills.

Many thanks to all concerned at Tandridge for the courtesy of the course and the excellent meal which followed an excellent golf course.

While all this was taking place the National Championship was being held at Carden Park. I'm afraid Kent did not win but it was a thoroughly enjoyable weekend. I would just like to say hello to Robert Challacombe and Dave Cuthbertson, who helped to make it an enjoyable stay. I would also like to mention to everyone that Neil Gilham, who I shared a room with, kept me awake with his snoring. Sorry mate!

In November there was the Regional Seminar at Writtle College, which was very informative and interesting and a credit to all concerned.

Next up was the AGM at Wildernesse. There are several points to note for those who did not attend (which happened to be about 95%). They are that John Fullagher has joined the committee, which is greatly appreciated by all. Secondly that Gary Debenham, of Broughton GC, has taken over as Secretary from the ever present Huw Morgan, who is sadly stepping down. It could be said that everybody will miss the hard work Huw has put in over the years. So from all concerned thanks for all your efforts and best wishes for the future.

The last golf day was the Turkey Trot and Christmas Dinner at Darenth Valley GC in early December. The winner was D. Wood with 38pts (bandit) and nearest the pin was G. Elliot.

We would also like to say a big thank you to all of the sponsors for their generosity, who made the day possible, as they did throughout the year, and we look forward to your continued support for the coming year - which looks prosperous.

We are also looking for new venues for the coming season so if your club would be interested then please contact us with details. Next month I shall have some new ideas for the coming year which will hopefully make it more interesting and appeal to a wider audience.

Anyway I hope everybody had a Happy Christmas and an enjoyable New Year and I hope that you all enjoy yourselves at Harrogate.

Any news, views or gossip give us a call on 01474 879200 or 0402 573994.

Kneale Diamond



South West
and South Wales
Paula Humphries
Tel: 01288 352194

Devon & Cornwall

A happy new Millennium to you all, I hope you have had an enjoyable festive season.

The Section's first meeting of the new century will be the Barenburg Seeds meeting which will be held at The Warren Golf Club on Wednesday, January 28, the day will be once again be sponsored by Barenburg Seed. The day will start with a singles Stableford golf competition with start times between 8.30am-10am. For non golfers the course walk will leave the clubhouse at approximately 10.30am. After lunch there will be an educational talk, please make sure your entries have been sent back to me by Monday, January 17, as I will be at BTME that week.

Our Devon Garden Machinery-sponsored meeting was held at Manor House Hotel on Wednesday, November 17, this meeting was also the Section's AGM.

As always the day started with our golfing members competing for the Toro Trophy, which was played in a foursome format. Our non golfing members were treated to an excellent guided tour of the course by Course Manager, Mike Symonds.

After an excellent lunch Alan Dommett, from Devon Garden Machinery, presented the prizes on behalf of Toro and DGM to:

1. Andy Parker, Credition, & Tony Vokes, St Austell, 27pts;
2. Tony Gooch, Torrington, & Billy Spratt, Phoenix Irrigation, 26pts on back 9;
3. Simon Coombes, Daintion & Gerald Ayliffe, Wranaton, 26pts.

The Section would like to express its gratitude to the day's sponsor Devon Garden Machinery for its support and to the Management of Manor House for allowing our Section use of their excellent facilities and to all the Manor House staff for making the section so welcome. Special thanks must go to Mike Symonds and his crew who had the course in fine condition.

The Section's AGM followed the golf presentation and was opened by the Chairman Terry Farkins.

The Section Administrator opened his report with the balance sheet for the year ending September 30. He explained that during the last financial year the board of management had called an EGM, as it had come apparent that a few changes to the constitution regarding the financial issues needed to be made. The main change was to make sure that Section funds would be independent and wouldn't be included into the main account for end of year figures. Also, the constitution now requires section accounts to be professionally

audited, which have been done this year.

The Section remains indebted to all the companies who have sponsored the section meetings over the last year, namely Avoncrop, Barenbrug, Devon Garden Machinery, P.J. Flegg, Rhone Poulenc, Roffeys and Supaturf.

This financial year also saw a change in sponsorship of the fixture cards after the two year agreement with P.J. Flegg was completed. The Administrator thanked Patrick Flegg for his company's sponsorship and further development of our fixture cards over the past two years. As you are aware our new sponsor for the next two years are Rigby Taylor who have continued the further development of the cards bringing colour onto them. The Administrator thanked Martin Samuel for his support in securing the sponsorship and development of the cards. He also informed members present that the Section made a profit of £279.22 compared with a slight loss of £89.53 on the previous year. Although the Section made a profit, the administrator felt that members must keep membership participation at section meetings as possible to ensure the section can continue to secure sponsorship of our section meetings & fixture cards.

He asked members to make every effort to attend as many meetings as possible and add that every member present could help the section by contacting a member who you know doesn't attend and invite him or her along.

Approval of accounts proposed A. Parker seconded D. Blake

The Chairman opened his report by informing members that it had been a pleasure and an honour to serve as Chairman over the past year. He continued by congratulating Mike Bush, Deputy Superintendent at St Mellion, and William Collins, Head Greenkeeper at Falmouth, on their tremendous achievement in reaching the national finals of the Toro Student of the year finals. Also, he congratulated Tony James, of Tehidy Park, on winning the Charterhouse & Scotts National Championship held at Carden Park.

The Chairman's final congratulations were passed on to Gordon Child who is completing his second year as National Chairman a position that he thoroughly deserves for his contribution to greenkeeping over the years.

The Westurf trade show this year was a massive success and an ideal venue for our members and hopes that all members will support the show next year as it will be bigger and better than this year, the Chairman congratulated the Regional Administrator, Paula Humphries, who has redirected Westurf into a show with a future. Her hard work and enthusiasm for greenkeeping is a big asset to our

Region. The Chairman thanked Paula on behalf of the section for all her hard work and wished her a speedy recovery from her radiotherapy treatment. The Chairman on closing his report passed on the Section's thanks to all the trade companies who have supported the Section over the last year this was very much appreciated and he thanked members for helping the Section to be so successful. He thanked Richard Wisdom for representing the Section so well on the Regional Board, with the Chairman's final thanks going to Richard Whyman who is without doubt the best Section Administrator in the Country.

Committee elected. T. Farkins, Chairman & Regional Board Member. C. Rawlings, Vice Chairman. R. Wisdom, Regional Board Member, C. Gadsby, S. Getson, M. Morgan, M. Samuel, President one year term, A. Dommett, Trade member two year term, J. Palfrey, Trade member three year term, R. Whyman, Section Administrator.

In November the Section held its first pesticide training course and test at Bude & North Cornwall which was sponsored by Farm Industries Ltd Textron dealers for Cornwall. After the excellent training course the course achieved 100% pass rate, congratulations to all. I am planning another course in February, for details please contact me on 01288 353438.

I finish my Section report on a sad note with the news that Jack Manley who was Head Greenkeeper at Torquay Golf Club for many years and an active member of the Section passed away in November. The Section's thoughts go to Jack's family. Richard Whyman

South Coast

Welcome to the 21st Century. I hope that you all had a good time and didn't end up too much under the weather with all the celebrations. A Happy New Year to everybody. Let's hope that BIGGA can really push forward and build on all the good work that has been done.

Details of the AGM and the Christmas Stableford will be in the next month's report.

Our first event for the Year 2000 will be at Canford Magna. The date and time January 12 at 10am. The speaker will be Bob Buckingham. He will be talking about Toro products. This will be followed by lunch and nine holes of golf. Let's hope the weather will be a bit better than it was last year. If I remember rightly, the golf was rained off.

On Thursday February 8 our Section/Regional Seminar will be held at Sparsholt College. Some very good speakers have been arranged by Jef, our very able secretary. Details should be with you by the time you read this report. Those of you wish-

ing to attend, return your cheques and entrance slips to Jef Drake as soon as possible. This is to make sure the caterers have an idea of how many will be attending. Jef has put a lot of hard work into organising this seminar. It is up to all of us as members of the section to make every effort to attend and give the seminar our total support.

Looking ahead to March 8, a talk from a representative of Scotts Fertilisers at Crane Valley Golf Club. This will be followed by lunch and 9 holes of golf.

Ken Lodge

South Wales

Looking back on Wednesday, November 17 our Section seminar was a great success and well attended, thanks to Derrick Cashmore who, on behalf of the Principal, welcomed our Section to Pencoed College huge thank you to the speakers of the day Graham Francis, Tony Webster of TIS, Len Dixon of Field Capacity, Peter Hampton of Bernard & Co Ltd, David Shelton of Sheltons Sports Drainage Solutions. Also thanks to Ken Richardson who travelled down to be at the seminar I'm sure like us you enjoyed the day Ken, thanks again for supporting the Section. Thanks to the caterers for the spread which was delicious. A presentation was made on the day to Peter Gillard for his commitment and friendship to the Section after his second retirement. Last but not least our compère for the day was none other than the legendary Malcolm Davies who made the day run so smooth.

On November 24 the Regional Seminar held at Cannington College was well attended. The speakers consisted of Dr Mike Canaway, from STRI; Dr Bob Daniels, of Scotts; Dr Danny Thorogood, of IGER; Dr Stephen Bernard, of Bernard & Co Ltd, and Prof Bill Adams, of the University of Wales. Lots of relevant and useful information gained in attending the day. Thanks to the host of the day Richard Whyman from the Devon & Cornwall Section what a splendid job.

Bring your up-to-date with the results of the golf, AGM and the gossip at P&K next month and what Tony Horne presents us with in our evening lecture this month. February sees guest speaker Peter Johnson on Wednesday 9th, at Pencoed College Speaker for March the 8th is yet to be announced.

Richard Hatcher

South West

A very happy new Millennium to all members of the South West Region. I hope your computers are still in good working order and that you haven't picked up any nasty viruses over the holiday period.

The Autumn Tournament took place at Bristol & Clifton, on November 11, and was kindly spon-

sored by Rigby Taylor. Once everyone had worked out how to actually get into the clubhouse, the day itself proved to be very successful. 1999 has seen many changes taking place at Bristol & Clifton, with the installation of fairway irrigation being the most important. Despite all the ongoing work, Matt Hawker and his team did a great job in getting the course into superb shape. The result of the tournament was as follows :- 1. Nigel Pring, 36 points; 2. J. Byrne, 35 points; 3. K. May, 33 points; 4. G. Cook, 32 points.

Following the meal, the prizes were handed out by Hugh Martin, of Rigby Taylor, who also handed over a cheque for £42 from the nearest the pin competition to the Captain of Bristol & Clifton, which will go to a nominated charity. Thanks were given to everyone connected with Bristol and Clifton including the committee, caterers, greenkeeper and Rigby Taylor for sponsoring the event.

The AGM then followed with a number of issues being discussed. One of the main concerns from many of those attending was that even though the Section has a membership of around 290, it was the same 40 to 50 members who turned out and supported every event. Where are the missing 240 members? Anyone with ideas about getting more of the members involved with the sectional events, should contact someone on the regional committee with their ideas.

One idea also discussed was the introduction of a handicap system just for our own tournaments, which would allow more fairer competition. John Keenaghan volunteered to look after this area.

The AGM said a sad goodbye to Ivor Scoones who is retiring from his position as Regional Secretary. Ivor has played a crucial role in the formation and running of the BIGGA South West Region, contributing a huge amount of time and hard work for the benefit of all greenkeepers. Ivor's input will be particularly missed at committee meetings (although on the lighter side, it was acknowledged that these meetings will take place in half the time with Ivor's absence).

The meeting also showed its appreciation for the work of Peter Baynton, who is stepping down from his role as Secretary. Peter has done an excellent job of what is the most demanding of all the sectional jobs. His replacement will be Chris Jack.

Also taking place in November was the Regional Seminar held once again at Cannington College. The theme of the day was Research, from which a number of interesting speeches were given. I thought the speech from Stephen Bernhard about a new approach to reel maintenance was particular thought provoking and impressive. Many thanks are given to Cannington

College for hosting the event, all the companies that sponsored the event, all the speakers and their contributions and of course to Paula Humphries once again for all her hard work in organising the event.

The next event this year will be the Winter Tournament being held at Painswick G.C. on February 23. Your attendance at this event would be very much appreciated. If you would like to take part in the over 50s competition in June this year, Terry Humphrey would be glad to hear from you. His telephone number is 01454 778871.

I have arranged a number of training courses for early part of this year including the following: A one day First Aid Course to be held at the Southern Ambulance Training College, Chippenham, on Tuesday February 15th.

A one day Abrasive Wheel course to be held at The Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester on Thursday February 3rd.

A PA2 Tractor Mounted Spraying Course to be held on Thursday March 2nd.

A PA6 Knapsack Spraying Course to be held on Wednesday March 8.

To enrol on the spraying courses, you must have obtained the PA1 Foundation Module Spraying Certificate. If you would like to take part in these or any other course, please contact me on the following number, 01249-783382.

Paul Cunningham.

Northern Ireland

North East

I would like to begin by apologising for having nothing in around the green for the last couple of issues. I have been so busy with work and moving house that I have not had time. So let me start by giving you my new phone number and address 012667-72125 or 07977-362938. 7 Parkamore Estate, Glenariff, BT44 OAY. Any information suitable for around the green would be greatly appreciated.

By now you should all have received a questionnaire on how we should proceed over here in the near future I hope you will all take time to read it and return it. It was decided at the AGM to carry out this questionnaire because of the numbers who did not attend. Because of the importance of this issue we have decided to hold another meeting on January 24 at Portstewart G.C. at 7pm to discuss the matter further. At this meeting we will also be looking to vote in a new committee so if you are interested please fill out the relevant part on the questionnaire.

Eamonn Farrell.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank those of you responsible for supplying Section Notes for all the great work that you do.

I know it must seem like a thankless task when you have a deadline approaching and you've got nothing to write about but generally the pages do provide more than enough news to keep everyone interested.

I'd also like to remind long time Section Note contributors, and inform those who have been handed the task, of those deadlines.

The cut off point has always been around the 5th of the month - eg for the January Notes the deadline was December 5. There is a little leeway as I know there are sometimes events you wish to include and you hold the Notes back. That's fine but if you could use the 5th of the month as your regular deadline I'd appreciate it.

You may wonder why it is so early in the month so, as we have a little space to play with this month, I'll take the chance to explain.

Normally the magazine arrives on your door mats in the first few days of the month of issue - January magazine will have arrived with you in the first week of the year. At our end to enable this to happen, and in the post as early in the month as possible, our printers have to be supplied with the entire contents - editorial and advertisements - two weeks before then, which takes us into the middle of the previous month.

Then to give David, our designer, a chance to lay-out the pages in an attractive fashion he needs another full working week. This takes us back to around the 12th of the month.

Invariably there are elements of the magazine that require me to work close to that deadline so it is ideal to have those parts of the magazine that are not particularly time sensitive cleared early. Section Notes are one such element, bearing in mind that they also have to be typed onto our computers by Christine when they come in.

I hope this explains to you how we can need a full month to process your Notes. As I said there is some leeway but the earlier you send them in the more it will help.

It is also helpful if you can have them typed or in clear handwriting, to reduce the number of misspelt names we print, while a recommended word count for each Section would be around 500. (This column is 500 words long to give a measure). Obviously, if you've had a particularly busy month, don't feel you have to miss anything out just to keep it under 500.

The Section Notes are a valuable element of the magazine - often the next read after the Recruitment pages! - and I do appreciate the work you put into producing them.

Thanks a lot and keep up the good work.

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Walter Woods made his annual pilgrimage around the Toro finalists and found six wonderful individuals working on some wonderful and varied golf courses.

Raising the

When the R&A officially approached Tom Morris to return from Prestwick to St Andrews with the job description of Professional Golfer, Greenkeeper on the Old Course and Caddie Master his salary was £50, an enormous sum in those days.

He was also provided with an assistant, Mr Honeyman, who was armed with a barrow and shovel. With Old Tom's words echoing in his ears "More sand Honeyman, more sand". Mr Honeyman applied sand to greens and fairways.

Old Tom would not know it then but he was setting a standard which would have far reaching effects all over the world.

The next most important standard which measured improvement would be the lawn mower, invented by Edwin Budding in 1830. Gone would be the scythes and sickles and in would come the push mower and horse drawn gang mowers. Old Tom Morris, along with Honeyman, would be in their glory.

Over many years, further improvements have been made, mostly to cutting machines, but also to aeration equipment that can break up the most severely compacted surfaces.

Today's greenkeepers will have appreciated all this development but they too are constantly setting standards. Fairways on today's

Championship golf courses are sometimes better than greens were many years ago, with equally fast stimpmeter readings. Greens can be cut in a fraction of the time with precise uniformity.

In 1987 when BIGGA was inaugurated with the aim of formalising education, standards were being constantly improved. Golf Course Managers can now communicate at the highest level and their job has become a profession and they must cope with the demands placed on them by the ever increasing expansion of golf.

A few years ago an approach was made by Bob Buckingham of Toro and Graham Dale and Peter Mansfield of Lely suggesting that they would like to finance an award which would measure new standard setting related to individual golf courses and Course Manager's education.

This Award, the Toro Award for Excellence in Greenkeeping, has become an annual event with participation growing each year. For the first few years the fear factor was apparent with Course Managers reluctant to enter, thinking that they might not meet the criteria. This has now changed with the knowledge that clubs and individuals who enter are winning because by doing so they are pushing the quality levels still higher... just as Old Tom Morris did.

At the beginning of each year the entry forms are sent out and returned. The entrants are then organised into their own Regions where they can be assessed using retired, respected Course Managers who have time to visit. From these visits a short list of six finalists is selected - usually the furthest away most inaccessible courses throughout the country!

Yours truly is then sent out to visit, armed with directions honed with military precision by Education and Training Manager, Ken Richardson.

The first club to be visited was north - where men are men and sheep are nervous. Right through glens, winding through snow topped mountains, past Inverness, turning right at the Black Isle to Fortrose and Rosemarkie. Both little fishing villages have escaped through time and the golf course is on a peninsula bordered on both sides by the sea, dictating that a hook should not be a part of your golfing armoury.

This gem of a course is looked after by Stuart Hogg, who was an apprentice to Jim Paton, of West Kilbride.

Stuart is enthusiastic about his profession and always willing to learn about the combination of old techniques and modern methods. The golf club is one of the most friendly, hospitably you will meet making it no wonder why Stuart enjoys his work there.





standards

From the furthest north I headed south, past Hadrian's Wall to the historic city of Chester and Carden Park, venue for his year's BIGGA National Golf Championship. Andy Campbell, without his kilt, is the Course Manager who with each passing year is becoming more professional and showing us what can be achieved by good education. Andy is responsible for two courses, the Cheshire and the Nicklaus, designed by the great man himself. Both courses were beautifully manicured having dried out from torrential rain the previous month.

Yeovil was my next stop down the M6, past spaghetti junction through traffic jams then into this delightful course which contains 27 holes. Our Chairman, rang to inform me of the young Course Manager's ability and after meeting him I could understand why. Matt Maryon was a breath of fresh air. Young and ambitious with a large appetite for education he made me believe he could easily perform the duties of General Manager. The golf course was perfectly presented with well maintained surfaces for members and visitors to enjoy.

Brian Turner, of Sunningdale, was my next port of call giving me the opportunity to call on Chris Kennedy and family at Wentworth which had just finished with the World Matchplay and another successful year for the previous Hags Castle man.

The following day I spent with Brian walking round one of the finest and most picturesque courses in the world. The venue for many Championships, both professional and amateur over the last few years, Brian has adopted a policy of reducing NPK levels to greens of both courses. The New course has a large amount of Bent grass, some Fescue and Poa where the Old course is more dominated with Poa, owing to the large amount of traffic it receives. This policy will be difficult, requiring the support of his committee, but nevertheless if the golf club wants Championship standards it will have to be done and Brian will be the very man to do it.

Leaving Sunningdale it was north again to Fulford Heath, just south of Birmingham to meet Kim Blake, the Course Manager of this lovely parkland course which contains lakes surrounded by mature trees and flowering bushes. This course was perfectly maintained, mostly for membership and visitor play, although County fixtures were a regular owing to its delightful setting.

Kim, is a BIGGA enthusiast, encouraging his staff to participate in all educational pursuits. This is also reflected on their individual performance in their combined efforts to provide quality.

Leaving the congestion of Birmingham it was northwards on the M1, which frightens the living

daylights out of me, right to Durham and Chester-le-Street, where the locals speak funnier than I do.

The day I chose was raining cats and dogs but the sun soon shone when I met Barrie Lee, the Course Manager of this parkland course which lies under the shadow of a huge castle. Originally it had an 18-hole course on the estate then it was changed adding more holes towards the river making 18 holes and a five hole practice course. Barrie is an amazing, energetic fellow, constantly looking at ways he can improve his education which would be instantly relayed back onto his golf course.

During the finals at Aldwark Manor a long discussion took place involving the Toro management and BIGGA officials mainly about applying a fair system of marking which ensured that 50% of the marks went to golf course maintenance with the remaining percentage averaged out on the rest of the marking process to include the final interview.

As you will all be aware Brian Turner, from Sunningdale, won the Award. It could not have gone to a finer individual who was an outstanding candidate and a credit to his profession.

It is also important to thank the Toro Company for allowing BIGGA to run an award which helps to raise the standards and gives such valuable prizes.

From left to right:

- 1 Matt Maryon at Yeovil
- 2 Stephen Skachill cuts a green at Chester-le-Street
- 3 Fortrose and Rosemarkie
- 4 Fulford Heath
- 5 Sunningdale
- 6 Carden Park



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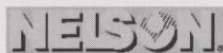
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Ad Ref 31

Wellingborough GC decided to have all 18 greens rebuilt in one go and work started in mid-July. As Scott MacCallum discovered, they will soon be reaping the benefits...

Taking the Bull by the horns?



Many established golf clubs find themselves in a quandary. Saddled with ageing greens, built to cope with the playing levels of the day, which now struggle to cope with the increased year round play they are presented with the following options.

Do they?

a) Do nothing and accept that they will be forced to play temporary greens on an increasingly regular basis each winter. Or ...

b) Decide to rebuild the greens to a modern specification and face the cost and undoubted upheaval that ensues.

It is fair to say that eventually the second option is likely to prevail but that merely creates more options. How to go about it.

Do they?

a) Carry out the job in stages using the existing greenkeeping staff over the course of a few winter programmes? Or ...

b) Bring in an outside contractor and split the job into three phases of six holes or two phases of nine completing the work over two or three years.

The pressures on a modern day greenkeeping team and the workload involved in rebuilding 18 greens may edge a club towards the second option where the amount of upheaval would have to be assessed before deciding which way to go.

Or ...

There is a third option and the one chosen by the members of Wellingborough Golf Club.

They brought in an outside con-

tractor, S&G Ltd of Welwyn, who rebuilt all 18 greens in one hit. And what's more, to ensure they had the best conditions in which to do the work they started on the Monday after the finish of the Open Championship in July.

The benefit to the club was that the entire work was completed in just 15 weeks and the members of Wellingborough can look forward to enjoying their golf on brand new greens from next season.

"For many years Wellingborough had greens to be proud of, but only for a few months each year. Visiting societies during the summer could not believe that we were to be digging up our greens. But they didn't see them during the late autumn. We suffered from Black Thatch which meant that later in the year there was

Taking the Bull by the horns?

Below: Steve Clement and Chris Gilroy of S&G Ltd



very little opportunity for the greens to dry out and consequently they were soft and spongy. Putting became a lottery," explained Roy Tomlin, the Club's Secretary/Manager.

STRI Golf Course Architect, Jonathan Tucker, and, agronomist, Andy Cole, were involved in the project from the early stages and assisted the club in deciding what needed to be done and how best to go about doing it.

"Initially it was a slow process of the club agreeing that something needed to be done and then getting everyone on board to agree to it ... the committee and then the wider golfing membership," explained Jonathan.

"Once that was agreed that the work needed to be done the next step was to decide whether to do it in one hit or over two or possibly three years. The final decision was taken because of the difficulties in juggling the maintenance of old established greens with the new ones ... and the fact that the disruption would be kept effectively to one year. Although I do believe that finance was also very cogent argument," he said.

On the face of it it seems a reasonable and considered decision but remarkably Wellingborough may be one of the first to have taken this option.

"It is very unusual that a club should bite the bullet in this way. It is the first time I have been involved in a project like this. Usually a club likes to see the fruits of its labour and see how it does in the first year before moving on to year two," said Jonathan.

In fact it was not until a couple of months before the work was due to start that the decision was finally taken and S&G put in two tender quotes, one for nine plus nine and the other for doing it all in one go.

The club held a very successful meeting of members - around 200 attended at which the club officials, together with Jonathan and Andy, made presentations.

"We were able to get over the reasoning behind why we wanted to do it in one phase."

Bob Savine - the "S" in S&G - who explained just how what could be construed as the more drastic route for the club is also the most cost effective.

"There are savings for doing it all together on materials, not having to remobilise for the second or third years and on company overheads and these amounted to about 10%, which in monetary terms is quite significant."

The 15 week time period to complete the contract held no fears for S&G who ensured that everything was in place before they started work.

"We anticipated having it all done in 12 weeks and if it wasn't for a bit of bad weather we would have achieved it. As it is we will have to go into week 15."

Bob, and Chris Gilroy - the "G" in S&G - worked closely with Head

Greenkeeper, Ian Marshall, who has more than 20 years experience on the course.

"What he doesn't know about the course isn't worth knowing and any problems we encountered, for example with electricity or gas mains, he knew exactly where they were which saved us valuable time. He also had to prepare the 18 temporary greens."

Ironically when the time came to dig up the existing greens they looked in superb condition.

"We played them and were hard pushed to find anything wrong with them. Ian had done a great job papering over the cracks, but in the winter you couldn't play on them," said Bob, reiterating what Roy Tomlin had said.

Having said that the work was being done in one hit the job was actually planned in phases before the work started.

A total of 10 men, including Bob and Chris, undertook the work while S&G has recently employed Steve Clements, formerly of Whitbread, as a Project Manager. He visited the site once or twice a week.

"The plan was to reconstruct three greens a week but because the weather was so good in the first few weeks we were almost getting to a point of doing four a week, and that was everything from re-root zoning and resurfacing," said Steve.

The original turf was scrapped and Rolawn washed turf was brought in, the decision being that turf, as opposed to seed, would give the greens a head start.

"As well as the greens reconstruction the irrigation system around each green was also renewed," said Steve.

Credit must also go to the golf club for sacrificing a large proportion of their summer season to allow the work to take place in advantageous conditions.

"The Open had only finished on the



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Sunday and work here started on the Saturday and they were on temps from then on. Not many clubs would contemplate the disruption to their club competitions and bigger societies," said Jonathan.

The upside is that it allowed the work to be done much quicker than if it had been limited to the autumn and winter.

"Just to give an example, when I was at Whitbread the policy was not to do any construction work in the summer. We would take greens out of play in November and not be finishing the work until the first week in May. On another occasion we took a green out of play on April 1 and it was finished by May 1 so what took six months in one case took just one in another merely by choosing a different time of year to do it," said Steve.

"You are better off leaving your

greens in play over winter, no matter how bad they are, rather than try to rebuild them in the winter," he added.

Steve explained that he had come across situations recently whereby architects had attempted to impose damages on a contractor starting work in October should he not finish the work in the agreed time.

"That either shows a lack of awareness of what can happen to ground in the winter or an acceptance that the contractor will be working in wet conditions. To any good contractor that is not acceptable."

It is that sort of knowledge and experience that encouraged S&G to bring Steve on board.

"S&G has gained from Steve's experience and as a team - S&G, Jonathan Tucker and the golf club, we've worked well. That's what has made this project so successful," said Bob.



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