

## Craig regains club champion title

### BARNARD CASTLE GOLF CLUB

FORMER assistant professional Craig Hamilton regained the title of club champion he first won in 1996, despite a second round struggle on Sunday.

The two-handicapper shot a two over par 75 to lead after the first round, but slipped to an 82 in humid conditions in the afternoon.

Richard Hinton continued his excellent form with two rounds of 79 to finish one stroke behind, while Phil Weldon was two further adrift after rounds of 78 and 82.

Taxi driver Neal Hallimond, a seven-handicapper, won the second round with a 76 but was too far adrift after his opening 89.

Pauline Connelly won the Ladies' Championship with rounds of 79 and 84 off her handicap of seven.

In the Handicap Championship, Marion Robinson finished second in both rounds

to take the overall title with nett scores of 79 and 77 off her handicap of 23.

Dianne Wilkinson, who plays off 15, had the best nett score in the second round with 76.

Phil Ball amassed the excellent total of 40 points to be the comfortable winner when the seniors held their away day on the links at Redcar.

Known as Cleveland Golf Club, this is the only links in Yorkshire and has the redundant steelworks as its imposing backdrop.

In a stiff breeze, 27 players enjoyed the challenge of adapting to links golf and Ball won the lower handicap section by five points from Don Kidd, with Alan Coulthard in third place.

In the over 18 handicap section, Colin Stead won with 36 points, ahead of club captain Ross Law (35) and Phil Appleby (34).

With all the par threes being into the wind, competition for the nearest-the-pin prizes

proved less than fierce, with one going unclaimed. Phil Hartley, Phil Ball and Lawrie Swiers won the others.

Seniors' captain Tim Wellock also introduced prizes for anyone scoring four points on a hole for a nett eagle.

Ken Blake managed the feat at both the 15th and 16th, with the one other success coming from David Cook's birdie three at the 17th.

#### Other results

Pro-am qualifier: Stephen Dowson 44 pts; Greg Upton 43; Richard Hinton 42.

Thursday stableford: Matthew Harrison 44 pts; Andrew Akers 43; Nigel Fletcher 41.

Seniors: Brian Holmes Trophy: Rob McIntyre nett 65; Keith Jones 67; Mike Burgess 69.

Ladies: 2nd McLuckie and Medal No 11: Melody Wade nett 72; Margaret Melrose 76; Joy Pallister 77.

Monday nine-hole Stableford: Maureen Raw 12; Doreen Braithwaite 8; Susan Miller 8.



**ALL SMILES:** Star performers in Barnard Castle Ladies' Club Championship, from left, Dianne Wilkinson, Margaret Melrose, Marion Robinson, with the Handicap Cup, Barbara Farrer and Pauline Connelly with the Club Championship trophy

## Mixed results for West in build up to 2019-20 campaign

BY HARRY CROWE

Reporter

IN short, it was a disappointing pre-season for West Auckland Town. Two wins, a draw and four defeats is how it concluded.

Compare this to the build up for last year's campaign when they had a 100 per cent record heading into their Northern League Division One season.

Without sounding all doom and gloom, West's preparations got off to the perfect start when Nathan Fisher struck early on against his former club Richmond Town in a narrow 1-0 win.

However, that delight soon turned sour with no victories in their next three games.

Firstly, a star-studded performance from National League North side Spennymoor Town saw them hit West for six before further frustration followed against Division Two opposition in Tow Law Town and Crook Town.

West claimed a scrappy 1-1 draw with the Lawyers only to suffer a shock 3-1 defeat at the hands of Jamie Tunstall's side in what was a lacklustre display.

West found their stride in their fifth pre-season match with a convincing 4-2 victory against Darlington Town with Anthony Bell, Adam Burnicle, Amar Purewal and Chris Hunter all on the scoresheet.

Despite finishing with two further defeats in the JR Cleator Cup against Dunston UTS and Northern Premier League side Marske United, West showed a bit more fight and determination but cutting edge on a more consistent basis still seems to be a key problem as the 2019/20 season looms large.

With the addition of 2012 FA Vase finalist Mark Bell,



**PASTURES NEW:** Denver Morris joined neighbours Bishop Auckland

former Whitley Bay goalkeeper Tom Flynn, ex-Newton Aycliffe defender Danny Mitton, as well as midfielders Joe Hillerby, Marc Ellison and Martin Grey Academy prospects Stefan Hornsby and Mason Hurworth, West have certainly strengthened whilst losing some big names who have headed off to pastures new.

Shane Bland, who starred in the League Cup triumph last season, made the switch to his hometown club Whitby Town, while Steven Snaith (Guisborough Town), Tom Portas (Stockton Town) and Denver Morris (Bishop Auckland) all signed for fellow Northern League outfits. Youngster Andrew Coulson has joined Richmond Town on a season-long loan after impressing in the pre-season friendly.

editor@teesdalemercury.co.uk

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### EBAC NORTHERN LEAGUE

West Auckland Town.... 2  
Ryhope CW..... 2

NATHAN Fisher's spectacular second-half strike earned West a hard-fought point in their opening Northern League Division One match at home to Ryhope CW.

Adam Burnicle gave West the lead on 20 minutes before Gary Pearson's side hit back with goals either half from James Ellis and Micky Rae.

Gary Forrest made four changes from Tuesday's defeat at home to Marske United with Mark Bell, Danny Mitton, Ross Colquhoun and Amar Purewal coming in for Tom Flynn, Liam Hegarty, Joe Hillerby and David Dowson.

Nathan Fisher carved out the first chance 11 minutes in when he struck a right-footed piledriver from 35-yards out only to see James Winter tip it round his left post.

Nine minutes later, West found the breakthrough after good work by Fisher and Tom Price, the latter crossing from the left to the advancing Burnicle who flicked it in to grab the opening goal of the season. It could, and probably should, have been two a few moments later as Adam Mitchell's corner was met in the centre by an unmarked Amar Purewal.

Jon Weirs made a vital clearance to avert the forward's goal bound header.

Ryhope offered very little in the first half but found an equaliser with two minutes of normal time remaining when Micky Rae's shot was inadvertently parried by Mark Bell into the path of Ellis and last season's prolific goalscorer made no mistake to give Gary Pearson's side a shift in mo-

## Fisher strikes to earn an opening day point



**HONOURS EVEN:** Above, Adam Burnicle fires home West's opener. Below, Nathan Fisher, whose goal earned a point, takes on two defenders

Pics: Andy Mitchell

mentum.

On 53 minutes, Ryhope completed the turnaround when a well-worked short corner was delivered low by Ellis before being fired in by Rae to spark jubilant scenes in the visitors' technical area.

The last time these two sides met at the Wanted Stadium, it was a pulsating 2-2 draw back in December and it proved to be a case of déjà vu when Fisher's thunderous strike from just outside the area flew past Winter and nestled in the far corner to set up a tense finale.

With two minutes remaining, Ryhope almost scored a late winner after Ellis burst through following a teasing pass, however, Mark Bell came to West's rescue with a fabulous one-handed save to push his effort onto the woodwork as both sides had to settle for a hard-earned point.

West were due to make their first away trip of the season on Tuesday evening, travelling to Woodhorn Lane to



take on Ashington AFC. West Auckland: M Bell, Mitchell, Price, Cobain, Mitton, Colquhoun (Hegarty, 58), Dodds (c) (Hillerby, 78), A. Bell, Purewal, Fisher, Burnicle (Dowson (74)). Sub not used: Turns. Ryhope CW: Winter, Woods,

Cocks, Walker, Lay, Skidmore (Trewick, 70), Bird (Devlin, 71), J. Weirs, Rae (Hotchkiss, 70), M. Weirs, Ellis. Subs not used: Jones, Proctor. Attendance: 172

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