

Micklem, Gerald Hugh (1911–1988), golf administrator

Micklem, Gerald Hugh (1911–1988), golf administrator, was born at Coldblow, Burgh Heath, Banstead, Surrey, on 14 August 1911, the son of Hugh Micklem, a stock jobber, and his wife, Isabella Mary Sechiari. After schooling at Winchester College, he entered Trinity College, Oxford, in 1930, where he graduated with a fourth in philosophy, politics, and economics in 1933. He then, like his father before him, had a successful career in the city as a stockbroker. Along with his inherited wealth this allowed him to retire early to live in a luxurious house near Sunningdale, a golf club he had joined as a youth. During the Second World War he served with the Grenadier Guards in the western desert and suffered a hand injury, fortunately not severe enough to affect his golf adversely.

Although Micklem gained an Oxford blue for golf, he did not emerge as a prominent amateur player until his mid-thirties, when he was runner-up in the 1946 English amateur stroke-play championship and winner of the English amateur championship at Ganton the following year, a title he won again at Royal Birkdale in 1953. Between 1947 and 1955 he played four times in the Walker cup, the biennial competition between British and American amateurs, missing out only in 1951. At this time, as in its professional equivalent the Ryder cup, the United States was dominant and Micklem secured only one victory—in the foursomes in 1953. He was also non-playing captain twice, in 1957 and 1959. He represented England in home internationals nine times. He took a keen interest in the annual President's Putter competition for Oxbridge blues and, from 1941, played in thirty-six consecutive events. Although he won only the 1953 final, he reached the semi-final stage twelve times and overall won 76 of the 111 matches in which he played. Fittingly, he became president of the Oxford and Cambridge Golfing Society.

Micklem later devoted himself to the administration of golf at local, national, and international level. As captain and committee member of his beloved Sunningdale, he helped restore the club to its premier status after the Second World War. From 1985 to his death he was president of Sunningdale, where in 1987 he hosted the Walker cup, the first occasion on which it was held at an inland club rather than on a links course. At various times he chaired the Royal and Ancient rules of golf committee, selection committee, and championship committee, in which latter role he widened the television exposure of the Open, expanded the concept of corporate hospitality, and modernized the marketing of the championship. In 1968 he was elected captain of the Royal and Ancient, the seventh Sunningdale member to gain that honour. He also served as president of the English Golf Union and president of the European Golf Association. His services to golf brought him the Bobby Jones and Walter Hagen awards from the United States and his appointment as CBE in 1969.

Micklem was abrasive and arrogant, at times downright rude to those who disagreed with him or whom he regarded as not knowing their place. He stood no nonsense, not even from the most famous players. In the world match-play championship of 1966 he took over as referee after Jack Nicklaus had disagreed vehemently with a decision of the official in charge of his match: no more was heard from the 'Golden Bear'. Yet Micklem was a generous benefactor

to many young players and, as captain of Sunningdale, he was responsible for building a new clubhouse for the Artisan Club, basically to enable working men to play at private clubs in return for maintenance work on the course and elsewhere.

Micklem never married. He died of a cerebrovascular accident on 21 May 1988 at St Peter's Hospital, Chertsey, Surrey.

Sources: *The Times* (23 May 1988), 18 · J. Whitfield, *Sunningdale golf club, 1900–2000* (2000) · J. Behrend, *The amateur* (1995) · R. Green, *Illustrated encyclopedia of golf* (1994) · P. Alliss, *The who's who of golf* (1983) · B. Ferrier and G. Hart, eds., *The Johnnie Walker encyclopedia of golf* (1994) · J. Sheridan, *Sheridan of Sunningdale* (1967) · archives of the Professional Golfers' Association, The Belfry, Sutton Coldfield · b. cert. · d. cert.

Archives: Professional Golfers' Association, The Belfry, Sutton Coldfield · Royal and Ancient Golf Club, St Andrews · Sunningdale Golf Club, Berkshire

Likenesses: photograph, repro. in Green, *Illustrated encyclopedia of golf* · photograph, repro. in Ferrier and Hart, *Johnnie Walker encyclopedia of golf*

Wealth at death: £3,264,609: probate, 11 July 1988, *CGPLA Eng. & Wales*

--Wray Vamplew, 'Micklem, Gerald Hugh (1911–1988)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/65146>, accessed]