To be a Golf Course Manager...

Few will deny that the title 'Course Manager' is one that is open to misinterpretation. The Association believes that to justify such a title it is vital that a course manager should be fully conversant - and be properly tested and certificated as competent - in such matters as the pesticides and legislation. In addition to demonstrating sound agronomic knowledge, the modern course manager should also give careful consideration to those management skills which fall under the broad umbrella of communication, motivation and stimulation. To the head greenkeeper, young or old, we put the following questions:

Have you the craft skills of greenkeeping but wish you could communicate more skilfully with your staff and green committee? Would you like to be a better manager, with the ability to prepare monthly reports and make verbal presentations at green committee meetings?

To the Chairman of Green or Course Convener we ask: Does your greenkeeper require better management skills - especially those of communication - and the ability to make presentations in both written and verbal form? Would not such skills make your Club life more pleasant and productive - and your golf more enjoyable?

The Association has the answer. Following critical acclaim at both BIGGA headquarters and the BTME seminars in Harrogate, we have negotiated with two acknowledged experts, Paul Whiteley and Frank Newbury, who have the supreme skill of training others in the art of communication, stimulation and motivation, to present a week long course for Head Greenkeepers who genuinely want to become Golf Course Managers.

Because the programme is a personalised and intensive one, places will be limited to the first twenty applicants and would-be attendees are urged to confirm a place without delay. The inclusive cost: accommodation, meals and wonderful training sessions, is £495 including VAT. Cheques should be made payable to BIGGA.

The Royal Birkdale Golf Club tell us that 63 year old Tom O'Brien, their head greenkeeper for the past 14 years, has expressed a desire to take early retirement in 1992, the Club having been unable to persuade him to change his decision. Tom joined Royal Birkdale from Gullane in 1978 and has prepared the course for two Open Championships.

Amenity management PR man, Mike Saul, has established a new public relations business - Landline PR - based in Shrewsbury. Previously a director of a specialist division of Agrafax PR, he has handled work for companies including ICI, Nomix-Chipman and Maxicrop International. A soil scientist and drainage specialist by training, he also held the post of Technical Secretary to the Soil and Water Management Association.

Let's not forget to congratulate Howard Swan on being admitted to the regulatory body for golf architecture, the British Institute of Golf Course Architects, as a full member. Howard, the son of a greenkeeper, worked for 16 years in design and construction before setting up his own practice in 1987. He founded the British Association of Golf Course Constructors in 1980 and for five years, until 1990, was Chairman of the National Turfgrass Council.

Phil Baldock, Chairman of the Surrey section of BIGGA and a member of the SE Regional Board, is moving from Hankley Common to take up the prestigious position of head greenkeeper at the delightful Harry Colt masterpiece, Royal Portrush. We are sure he'll find no difficulty in negotiating 'Calamity Corner' or enduring 'Purgatory' and will thoroughly enjoy managing the only Irish course ever to stage an Open Championship. If things get too tiring, he can always turn to the famous eleventh, the notorious 'Fether Bed'. Phil had long ago set his sights on Royal Portrush (he is married to Anne, a fair colleen from Northern Ireland), and having achieved this first ambition, his next is to see The Open return to Royal Portrush.

Members of the Northern Ireland Golf Greenkeepers Association (NIGGA), who have prepared the course for two Open Championships and two Ryder Cup Matches, together with countess other major tournaments, and his legacy to the greenkeeping craft is one that will always be remembered. Greenkeeper International offers sincere sympathy to Mrs Pate on her sad loss.