EGU attacks BIGGA

The English Golf Union has launched a surprising attack on your organisation. In the January/February edition of Amateur Golf it implies that it has grown too quickly and that the magazine is losing money. It is wrong on both counts. There are other veiled criticisms which we have answered below, but the big question is 'Why have they done it?'

1. What problems? BIGGA's showcase, the BTME, gets better and better each year, the magazine is a market leader and membership keeps growing.

2. There have been no direct grants from the Home Unions to BIGGA.

3. The GTC is not entirely separate as there is a great deal of collaboration between BIGGA's education unit and the GTC, as was seen with the new career video premiered at the BTME. BIGGA's in-house training programme continues to develop.

4. Not just successful, hugely successful (see this month's letters page).

5. Amateur Golf, what do you mean? No doubt the companies within the industry who support BIGGA would welcome an explanation of these 'strings'.

6. Well, we dispute it. Figures presented to members at the AGM showed that the magazine made a substantial profit and made a significant contribution to the growth of the Association.

7. Yes, it has grown and grown. Membership has grown 404 percent from 1278 in '87 to 5,162 in October '93, BTME has grown by 74 percent from '93 to '94 and 30 percent from '92 to '93, and the Association's turnover has grown from £61,258 in 1987 to £707,733 in the first nine months of 1993. Of course such growth can't be handled by a one-man band, so the staff has grown to 11.

8. Yes, David White chose to resign for his own reasons but we are surprised to hear of a highly publicised dispute.

9. The AGM was exceptionally well attended, highly constructive and ended with a wholehearted endorsement of current direction and plans for the future.

Neil Thomas, BIGGA's executive director, commented:

"I find it extremely disturbing that 'Amateur Golf', the official journal of the English Golf Union, is prepared to publish so-called information on BIGGA's affairs which is untrue, lacking in fact, misleading and contains innuendo. The unwillingness to quote sources or follow basic journalistic principles of checking material must force the question as to the motivation for this article. At a time when BIGGA is seeking to work closely with Home Union representatives through the Greenkeepers Training Committee it must be a cause of deep regret that 'Amateur Golf' has printed material which can only be interpreted as designed to undermine the stability of an association whose dramatic progress over the last seven years is a credit to the partnership of members, officials and officers working for the betterment of the greenkeeping profession as well as to the support received from the R&A and companies working within the industry."