I n the course of this column I will report from time to time on Board of Management matters and I believe a particularly important decision was taken at the recent December meeting. 1994 has been earmarked for the preparation of a five year plan which will take the Association through to the second millennium. Throughout 1994 there will be the opportunity to observe the workings of the Association after seven years of solid growth and achievement. Whilst the plan will be initiated from your Headquar ters there will be a full consultative process through the Board of Management to Regional Boards and Section Committees and then back up through the structure. I would urge each individual member who has something to say to make his views known to his Section Committee by contacting his Section Secretary - and the earlier the better!

Apart from looking at policies and programmes to take us forward from 1995, the review will examine the structure of the Association as established through the Constitution from Board of Management through regions to sections. Changes may be necessary to the Constitution. If so they need to be well thought out and capable of standing the test of time. The Constitution is fundamental to any organisation and whilst ours has served us well during the last seven years it may well need a little fine tuning now to ensure a viable structure for the Association into the next century. There has been much discussion of late concerning the composition of the Board of Management, on how long Board members should serve and an increasing awareness of the demands made on Board members. At regional level the increasing amount of paperwork is a concern and there is a need for an uniformity of approach amongst Regional boards. In line with the Constitution sections continue of you may be aware of recent problems within the structure of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America. There the fundamental issue concerned a large organisation which was perceived to be losing touch with its members. As one GCSAA member put it…”The Board needs to know what the people in the field are doing, and the people in the field need to know what the association is doing… It’s a sign of opening up for the members out in the field’. Now here we are talking about an organisation over sixty years old. By comparison we are very much at the fledgling stage. However, after making allowances for size and tradition, some comparisons are valid. I have long since been aware of the need for BIGGA to provide within its structure the opportunity for any member to make his views known, and for that member to have the confidence that those views will be listened to, respected and, where appropriate, acted upon. With our membership now well past the 5,000 mark we need to examine the democratic processes we have in place to ensure that they will serve our members well in the future. BIGGA is a members’ organisation established not for the benefit of its officers or staff but for its growing membership and it is they who must ultimately determine the future direction of the Association.

During the early months of 1994 your senior management team at Headquarters will initiate the review and five year plan. Regions and Sections should be submitting ideas for consideration as soon as possible. After consideration by the Board of Management, the initial draft will be circulated to Regions and Sections in early summer with a view to comments being forwarded to Headquarters by the beginning of September. It will be incumbent on Regions and Sections to widely canvass the views of members at section level. During the autumn period a final plan will be drawn up for approval by the Board of Management and ratification at the 1995 Annual General Meeting. It will be a year of opportunity, a chance for objectivity, a time when we can consolidate our achievements but be innovative and initiate policies and programmes which will enhance our development. If, through this exercise, we can improve our structure and administration as well as set future goals then we will be strengthening BIGGA and ensuring that greenkeepers both now and in the future will be well served by a forward-looking, professional Association. Like me, I hope that you, the members, will look forward to the challenge.