Pat starts work on new headquarters

As soon as the bells to welcome in the new year had died down work began on BIGGA’s new Headquarters and training facility and it was on Monday January the 5th that Chairman, Pat Murphy, arrived at Aldwark Manor to perform one of his last official duties before BTME.

The cutting of the first turf on the ground which will house the new Headquarters marked the culmination of months and years of negotiation and planning.

The new building will be adjacent to the 16th hole of Aldwark Manor Hotel Golf and Country Club, just north of York, and only 100 yards to the Association’s existing Headquarters marked the culmination of months and years of negotiation and planning.

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The new building will provide, BIGGA have dreamed about for several years and I am extremely proud of the success the Association has enjoyed to date, and with the excellent facilities the new building will provide, BIGGA is sure to go from strength to strength,” he added.

Within hours of the first turf being turned site preparation work began in earnest and a matter of days later the site was virtually fenced off and heavy machinery had been moved in.

Patron’s receive their just desserts at Award dinner

The Scottish Region Patron’s Award Dinner at the Terrace Hotel, in Stirling, saw an excellent attendance of Patrons, Regional Board and Section representatives.

The Region and Patrons congratulated all winners of the awards each of whom was presented with a scroll, books and given a three day trip to BTME.

The awards went to members who had devoted a great deal of time to Section business.

Picture shows award winners L-R. Stuart Sime, Leven Links GC; George Morrison, West Kilbride GC; Kenny Duncan, Danfemline GC; Gordon Trotter, Glencorse GC; Dale Robertson, Newmacher GC; Stuart Taylor, Kilmernont GC; John Morton, Alford GC; Robert Thomson, Peebles GC John Scott, Kirkhill GC with Scottish Regional Chairman Sam Morrison.

Abbott wins holy water for Sunningdale

M J Abbott Ltd has begun work on the installation of a new irrigation system to both the Old Course and New Course at Sunningdale Golf Club.

The contract incorporates the system which incorporates the Maxi Nimbus Control System, Maxi Weather Station, Eagle, Falcon and R50 series sprinklers and PEB pressure regulating solenoid valves.

All staff working on the site are directly employed by M J Abbott Ltd which owns and operates a fleet of specially adapted machinery for use on golf courses.

M J Abbott Ltd are no strangers to working at prestigious Clubs. Their portfolio includes The Belfry, Celtic Manor Hotel and Golf Club, and Killarney Golf and Fishing Club among many others.

Members get Open invitation

Applications are invited from members to join BIGGA’s Greenkeeping Support team for the 1998 Open Championship at Royal Birkdale.

Those wishing to be considered must be Full Members of the Association and should be available from Wednesday evening July 15 to Sunday evening July 19. The opportunity to take part in the most important golf event of the year is open both to team members from previous years and also those members who are wishing to participate for the first time.

Duties will be allocated on a rota basis over the four days of play and include early morning course preparation and bunkering, while matches are in play and evening course maintenance.

Members may also be asked to co-operate with the gathering of information for distribution in the Press Centre which helps raise the profile of the Association at the Championship. All members of the Sunbird Team will be expected to remain on the course throughout the day and be available in the event of any unforeseen circumstances arising.

Accommodation, all meals and transport will be provided by the Association but successful applicants will be expected to pay their own travelling expenses from home to the Championship and return.

Those members wishing to be involved should put their names forward in writing to John Pemberton, Administration Manager at BIGGA’s HQ, Aldwark Manor, Aldwark, Alne, York, Y06 2NF, to be received no later than March 16.

All names will then be put into a draw to select the successful applicants. If you have not been to this event before in this capacity and wish to learn more about what will be expected please do not hesitate to contact John. Tel: 01347 838581.

I use RiverFeed because

It suits my course

Alastair Tough, Muckhart GC

Ad Ref 212

February 1998 Greenkeeper International
Ken Richardson announces the launch of three new competitions...

Take up the challenge

Thanks to the continuing support of Ransomes, we were, once again, able to give an increased number of delegates a true Learning Experience.

The National Education Conference and Workshops started the week off on a high note with some very high quality presentations and intellectually stimulating subjects. The use of a new liquid crystal projector and high quality slide projector ensured that all conference presentations could be seen and should ensure a better quality of video. Despite the problems that we had rearranging some early seminar sessions due to a problem obtaining slides, the BTME Seminars gave all attendees something to ponder, with a record number attending the talk by Mr Ortiz Patino. With the Seminars returning to the Royal Hall, there was space for all those who wanted to attend and it was gratifying to see over 100 delegates still in the Hall at the end of the last session. Thank you to all those who presented papers at the Conference and Seminars and to those who organised and ran the three workshops. We are thinking about the programme for 1999, already, and if anyone can suggest speakers or topics that they would like to hear then please contact me as soon as possible. Written transcriptions and videos of all Conference and seminar sessions are available from BIGGA HQ.

Three major competitions were launched at Harrogate, the TORO Student of the Year, the TORO Excellence in Greenkeeping and the BIGGA Golf Course Environment Competition, in association with Amazone Ground Care and Rhône Poulenc Amenity. All registered training providers will be sent copies of the Student of the Year leaflet and entry forms in the near future. So make sure that your college submits an entry. Remember, the winning student wins the TORO Scholarship, including and eight week study tour to the USA and the winner's lecturer wins a trip to the GCSAA show; which will be held in Florida, in 1999. Leaflets for the Golf Environment and Greenkeeping Excellence Competitions were available at BTME and will be sent to all golf clubs and head greenkeeper/course managers during February and March. Judging for the Greenkeeping Excellence Competition has been changed and courses will be judged by a panel of judges comprising respected, retired greenkeepers, chaired by Walter Woods. Additionally, the Competition is open to Master Greenkeepers and/or winners of the previous Miracle/Zeneca/ICI competition.

The last local supervisory management course of the 1997/98 season will take place at the Courtyard Hotel in Bradford, on 16 and 17 February. There are still plenty of places left for anyone who wishes to attend.

The Refund of Education/Training Expenses Scheme started in January 1998. Application forms for a refund of fees can be obtained from BIGGA HQ.

Finally, I would like to congratulate Chris Carpenter and Andy Campbell on becoming the tenth and eleventh Master Greenkeepers in the USA gives us a total of sixteen. The next Master Greenkeeper examination will take place on 28 and 29 March. Anyone wishing to sit the examination should contact me or Sami as soon as possible. Full details of the Master Greenkeeper Scheme can be obtained from BIGGA HQ.

Top: Billy McMillan thinks our sign which could do with a bit of levelling itself! Above: Concentrating hard during the golf course design workshop. Below: Our two latest Master Greenkeepers pictured here receiving their plaques from Chairman, Pat Murphy

The results were better than my expectations

Jim Smith, Ardeer GC
BIGGA’s Executive Director,
Neil Thomas reflects on BTME ‘98...

Sunday, January 18
Another year has rushed by and I’m heading for Harrogate and the BTME. It’s all of twelve minutes from home (the real reason why the exhibition ‘is held in Harrogate!). As I drive in it has been raining through the night and morning and it is very mild for the time of year. No danger of that white stuff this year. 3.30pm and preparations for conference registration have begun. Ken and Sami are in control. Many members already booked into the Majestic - they clearly like it there. I welcome our international guests and an informal dinner is followed with the rest of us. Good to welcome our international guests and an informal dinner is followed for many by a late night at the bar.

Monday, January 19
First job is to switch on the TV for the weather forecast. I don’t believe it! Dr Peter Hayes gets the conference underway in his usual efficient manner. At the outset one is impressed by the quality of the speakers and particularly how well our members present themselves, beneficiaries no doubt of BIGGA’s public speaking courses. The presentation of Master Greenkeeper Certificates to Andy Campbell and Chris Carpenter is a highlight - 16 Master Greenkeepers now since the inception of the certification scheme in 1990. Food and accommodation are again excellent in the Majestic and I’m feeling quite relaxed until the Chairman pointe- dly directs my attention through the window to the arrival of the white stuff. Heavy snow showers follow but it will all be gone before Tuesday, won’t it? And so it proved... Conference dinner is very enjoyable with a return visit from Dave Kendal - ‘the banker from York’ as our after dinner speaker. Excellent delivery - our international visitors kept pace and laughed with the rest of us. Good to wel- come Andrew Sunaway as our guest speaker. I have to mention Peter Wilson’s unavoidable absence on ‘business in the city’. What can this be? Now we all know. Some members retire from the bar at 6.30am!

Tuesday, January 20
Conference continues apace along with the three fully subscribed workshops. Comments would indi- cate that the Conference is the best yet. Noted that many members are now wearing BIGGA’s ‘brick’ badge - the Headquarters building project is already very much to the fore. The exhibition is looking good and Amanda is in charge. Short Board of Management meeting to elect Chairman and Vice-Chairman and then off to beer and burritos (no - I didn’t know what they were either!) gathering for the exhibitors. The fifth Hayter Dinner in the George Hotel follows superbly organised as usual by Kim Macfie and Barbara Garton. I really enjoy this dinner as I have noth- ing to say or do! Meanwhile the Past Chairs’ dinner takes place in the Majestic - a lively affair by all accounts - I can’t decide whether to book a referee or comedian for this event next year!

Wednesday, January 21
This is it. Hall A is buzzing long before 9.00am when the Chairman cuts the ribbon. Queues are form- ing (half way up the hill to the Majestic at one stage) and a great atmosphere. The marquee in use for the first time meets with warm approval. Off to the Majestic for the Chairman’s Luncheon. We are sorry that our President, Viscount Whitelaw, has been unwell and cannot join us but delighted to wel- come the Secretary of the R&A, Michael Bonallack to make the Golden and Silver Key Company presentations. He speaks of the R&A’s longstanding relationship with BIGGA and his pleasure at BIGGA’s progress. Prepare for AGM. This goes smoothly with a sense that everything is in good order when Cecil George rises with his inevitable and inimitable questions. Most staff are then off to the BTME. At 6.30pm I attend the Chairman’s pre-banquet reception for our VIP guests and make an early departure to check the ban- quet arrangements. All is under control and soon the 650 guests begin to gather in the reception area. I meet with Lee Hurst to check details for his appearance - he is very friendly and easy going. Any worries about the catering are soon put to rest - it is excellent. The Chairman speaks a few words and then at 10.00pm I introduce Lee Hurst and the cabaret is underway. Very funny and well received.

After Lee we look forward to Linda Nolan - a return visit after the 1995 Show by popular demand. And we are not disap- pointed. She is highly professional. Now I have often wondered what it is like to be picked on at an event of this magnitude. Now I know. I had been set up. Suddenly Linda is at my side and I am whisked away to the stage. It’s now or never. One choice is to die a death in front of all and sundry, the other is to get on with it. I wisely choose the latter and surrounded by her curvaceous charms I ham my way through the ‘ding-a-ling’ song. This can, I assure you, prove quite daunting given the natural level of eye contact with Linda sitting on your lap. I return weak-kneed to my chair. I am over-whelmed with congratulations from members - this simply hasn’t hap- pened in ten years so I determine to enjoy it. A great night and cer- tainly one I’ll never forget!

Thursday, January 22
Early start. 7.30am meeting of BTME Steering Committee. Well supported and everyone seems well pleased with the Show even if brains are not fully functioning at this time of the morning. I’m able to savour the atmosphere in the halls for a couple of hours before the FEGGA AGM. This is well attended and the progress of FEGGA in twelve months is there for all to see. In mid afternoon I check on preparations for the ban- quet which this year is being held in the International Centre. The nightclub setting is quite stunning. One can sense the growing anticipa- tion for the big social event of BTME. At 6.30pm I attend the Chairman’s pre-banquet reception for our VIP guests and make an early departure to check the ban- quet arrangements. All is under control and soon the 650 guests begin to gather in the reception area. I meet with Lee Hurst to check details for his appearance - he is very friendly and easy going. Any worries about the catering are soon put to rest - it is excellent. The Chairman speaks a few words and then at 10.00pm I introduce Lee Hurst and the cabaret is underway. Very funny and well received.

Friday, January 23
Tired but happy seems to sum up the mood of all present in the halls. Those who arrived on Sunday evening are still with it - just. Stamina is a prime requirement for the week. It’s been a great Show and a good start to the year for members and exhibitors alike. The Show closes at 1.30pm and the evacuation of personnel and equip- ment goes smoothly. One Board member tells me that he wishes it could carry on - I think I know what he meant. Thanks to every- one who contributed to and sup- ported the event and particularly to the exhibitors without whom there would be no BTME.

And finally...
Once again an abiding memory is of the audience at the banquet linking arms and singing with Linda Nolan “we’ll meet again don’t know where don’t know when”. But we do, don’t we? It will be in Harrogate from 18th- 22nd January 1999. Be seeing you.

I use RioFeed because

It’s the right feed for my course

Chris Yeaman, Swanston GC

All Ref 212
On the construction and maintenance side, the drainage of wet areas is in full swing following a mild Autumn. The grass is still so green, is this a sign of days. Tony Chambers, the President of the Club, n£tt 64; 2. George Wright, Crook, n£tt 65. The winning scores were as follows: 1. C. Oubon, on eventually setting his wife George Venables and David Welberry were unanimously elected and all other posts were duly elected. Thanks go to Ian Morton and Phil Belton who have stood down from the committee. Any other business covered a range of discussions that left the Secretary with plenty of ideas for 1998. The Section also agreed to purchase a computer with the help of regional funds. The fixture list of events will be posted to you as soon as possible.

Finally, close by wishing you success in greenkeeping and good golfing for the forthcoming year. Graeme Macdonald

North East

On December 11 we had our first Christmas Tournament at South Moor GC following the AGM. The results were:- 1. George Wright, Crook, nett 64; 2. David Catterson, Shale, nett 67; 3. David Venables, Crook, 67; 4. Alan Harrison, Garsfield, 65; 5. Tony McLure 69. Our thanks to the committee for their courtesy and also to Tommy Fenwick, the Head Greenkeeper and his staff for setting up the course and demonstrating it. How much rain had fallen in the past couple of days. Tony Chambers, the President of the Section presented the Section event.

The AGM was attended by 23 people and quite frankly it was a prettier sight than the turnouts of Shorts! It is only setting the stage for next year. We have had much more cupsets and round. Hopefully we shall have many more cupsets entering this new competition.

The Section event was held at Scarlett GC. The weather was not brilliant but at least the rain held off apart from a few spots now and then the AGM followed. Mike for presenting the prizes and taking the time to help me choose to them. Thank you also to Telford Jarvis and the lads for preparing the course so well in a period when the elements are not at their most pleasant. The results for the day were as follows: 1. S. Hardwick, 2. D. Collins, 3. A. Covert, 4. A. Baxter, 5. G. Porter, 6. T. Holmes, 7. S. Marsden, 8. D. Lindley, 9. Robin Smith, 10. E. Hurd. Nearest Pin: Richard Smith Following the golf we had an excellent barbeque and everyone enjoyed the evening. Thank you to the caterers and the bar staff.

Our 1997 AGM followed the tournament, where 29 members attended the meeting. The elected committee for 1998 were: President, Mel Guy; Chairman, John Waite; Vice-Chairman, Dave Mitchell, Ian Thompson and Gary Heppenstall. The elected committee included a new name which Mike has a poor turn out of members. The Chairman, David Walden, welcomed all and apologies were read and the previous minutes were passed. The Secretaries report covered the 1997/98 programme of events and the Secretary took the opportunity to thank all clubs for allowing us the courtesy of their courses and thanked all sponsors for the year. Excellent prizes. The Treasurer then explained the healthy financial report.

The election of officers onto the committee will not have a poor turn out of members. The Chairman, David Walden, welcomed all and apologies were read and the previous minutes were passed. The Secretaries report covered the 1997/98 programme of events and the Secretary took the opportunity to thank all clubs for allowing us the courtesy of their courses and thanked all sponsors for the year. Excellent prizes. The Treasurer then explained the healthy financial report.

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Weather was kind to all of us with just enough rain to prevent the course turning into deserts. I hope this coming season is just as kind (as it is too much to ask for?). At present we are putting together the future list for golf dates and venues and these will be posted as soon as possible.

On the education front remember that two local colleges are still running evening lectures. Berkshire College - Golf Course Design on February 4; Warren Farm - Irrigation on March 4; Warren Farm - Irrigation and Conservation on February 2; USGA Specification on March 25.

I know from experience it is difficult to go to all of the lectures but if you could try and make a couple of the above that would be great. A lot of the work that helps to make the Section run smoothly is carried out by the Committee and they tend to remain anonymous, well not any more below is a list of this years committee: Chairman - J. Edwards; Secretary - T. Houghton; Treasurer - A. Cooper & R. Wall; Handicaps - C. Vernon; Administration - T. French and R. Kates. It really I would like to make a plea to all members for information to fill these articles. Anything that you would like to share with us maybe a humorous or embarrassing story please let me know.

Lindsay Anderson

Essex

Well, the first month of the year and Hogmanay has passed and a report will appear in the March column.

Our first event of 1998 will have been held at Writtle College on February 3 with guest speaker, Frank Newberry giving us a taste of his expertise on supervisory management. Following on from the above, Frank will be our course tutor for our one day course to be held at Stockton Manor GC on March 10. The cost, including lunch etc will be £12. Places are limited to 12 on a first come first served basis. For further information please contact Martin Forrester on 01245 601311.

Our next evening lecture at Writtle College will be held on Tuesday March 17 at 7.30 pm in the main building and is open to all members enrolled on the course or with just a little nip in the air, in other words not as large as hoped for but all who did come had an enjoyable evening.

The other is a weekend course at the Royal East Anglian GC on March 25-26. Details of this event were given in our Christmas newsletter.

Suffolk

The results of the Suffolk open competition have been played and the final results are:- Winners - John Mathis and Richard Schofield; Runners-up - Kevin Boulall and Garech Roberts.

Brian Willmott

Kent

The Christmas AGM/Turkey Trot was called off due to snow and was rearranged the week after.

Despite it snowing as we started everybody got round and enjoyed the day. The course was in excellent condition considering the weather and thanks must go to Darenth Valley, Nigel Stapely and his staff. The food was, as usual, plentiful and I hope everyone enjoyed it.


Trade Prize. G. Sidders, King's Nearest the Pin, H. Morgan, Longest Drive, N. Gallham.

Sponsors on the day were Scotts and Avoncrop Amenity.

The Kent Section would like to thank all the companies who agreed to sponsor us last season. Without your support we wouldn't have been able to survive.

The final of the Ritefeed Matchplay was held at Sundridge Park.


We are currently looking at our venues for this year. The fixture card is fast shape and being:- 1. Joe Newman; 2. Ian Noble; 3. T. Hindmarsh and J. Cock; 4. S. Ellis and J. Fullager; 5. T. Hindmarsh and R. Jackson.

In May it is the Kent Section's turn to host the Regional Seminar. This will be held at Hadlow College on May 19. Please attend. You might learn something.

I have a request to all the people who moan that there is nothing in the magazine for Kent. Please send me a few lines or phone me with any news. I cannot report on nothing.

Our thanks must go to Ray Day and Sundridge Park for courtesy and to Ritefeed for their generous hospitality on the day.

Huw Morgan

South Coast

Our Christmas Turkey Trot, AGM and Christmas Dinner was once again held at Royal Winchester GC. The weather was great for the time of year with just a little nip in the air, in other words a nice December day. The weather was, as ever in its usual immaculate condition all thanks to Phil Hanks and his stuff. Unfortunately I was not able attend the day however I am told that the Christmas Dinner was very very very good indeed and the carvery. Thank you to all of the catering staff for making the meal so delicious. We would also like to thank Mike, Ring, of Rigby Taylor, and Nick Collis of Nollor for their kind offer of their company Machinery, for their generosity in sponsoring the days events. Last, but not least, we must thank the Captain, committee and members of Royal Winchester out in March allowing us the courtesy of the course and the clubhouse facilities. To this we are very much indebted.

The results of the Turkey Trot were very close. The first two went on a countback on 39 points, the results being:- 1. Joe Newman; 2. Ian Noble;