BIGGA's contribution to Environmental Best Practice 2000 was recognised at the national Green Apple Awards ceremony in London. The gold award was made in recognition of the Association's development of the BIGGA Golf Environment Competition and its commitment to advancing the message of environmental responsibility and stewardship to greenkeepers, golfers and trade companies. The award also recognises BIGGA's positive impact in environmental matters on both the general and environmental media.

This is an appropriate time therefore to recognise again the vision of Rod Baker, Managing Director of Amazone, in originally establishing this competition in 1995. Since 1997 we have worked with Rod in promoting the competition which he remains totally committed to developing. Entries from golf clubs continue to rise each year and there is undoubtedly a growing national awareness of the competition which is leading to a much greater understanding of the positive aspects of golf clubs in terms of protecting the environment.

We should also recognise the major contribution which is made by Bob Taylor, Senior Ecologist for the STRI, and Dr Keith Duff, Chief Scientist of English Nature, as the competition judges. Their expertise and professional approach has done much to establish the credibility of the competition since 1995.

This year's Golf Environment Competition was undertaken by Amazone, together with the R&A, and we thank them for their backing and recognition of the value of this competition.

Within BIGGA we will continue to develop awareness of environmental issues relevant to golf courses and promote the adoption of best practice guidelines. BIGGA will continue to stimulate action and debate in relation to the 'Committed to Green' initiative. While taking pleasure in receiving this national award there is a realisation within BIGGA that there is still much work to be done in environmental matters. We need to be vigilant of the anti-golf brigade and seek to ever increase public awareness of the positive impact of golf courses as well as highlight to the conservation bodies that golf can be an acceptable land use providing valuable wildlife corridor habitat throughout the countryside.

Neil Thomas

BIGGA Chairman Elliott Small receives the Gold Green Apple Award 2000 at a presentation ceremony in The Cafe Royale, London.

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BIGGA's Chairman Elliott Small, of Bath, receives the Gold Green Apple Award 2000 at a presentation ceremony in The Cafe Royale, London.

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Scottish Golf Course Wildlife Initiative

The Scottish Golf Course Wildlife Initiative used The Open Championship at St Andrews as the ideal opportunity to spread the word about some of its recently launched projects.

"The reason we are distributing this information to a range of golfing, environmental and general media is in response to recent misinformed criticism of golf courses and their environmental impact," explained Senior Golf Course Advisor, Jonathan Smith.

"Particularly in Scotland, there has been much press and radio coverage recently, which has portrayed golf course management and development in a negative light. A great deal of this has been based on assumptions and misunderstanding of how golf courses are managed, and the potential golf courses provide to protect and enhance the environment."

The pack which was distributed is designed to raise awareness among the media, and resultantly the wider public of the positive role golf courses can play in the environment, and the efforts currently being made by both the golfing and environmental sectors to make this positive situation continue.

Scottish Golf Course Wildlife Initiative is a partnership of golfing and environmental organisations funded by the Scottish Golf Union, the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews, Scottish Natural Heritage and the Scottish Greenbelt Foundation.

Further information can be obtained from Jonathan at The Scottish Golf Course Wildlife Group, The Stables, Dalkeith Country Park, Midlothian, EH22 2NA Tel: 0131 660 9480 Email: scotgolf.wildlife@virgin.net

Support for Support Team

BIGGA's Open Championship Greenkeeping Support Team at St. Andrews this year were smartly turned out in polo shirts, caps and fleeces from BIGGA's logoed Slazenger range. The fleeces were sponsored by Rigby Taylor which are now available to all BIGGA greenkeepers through a product purchase incentive scheme which the company is running until October. The fleece makes a practical work wear garment for use around the golf course. Alan Halfyear, of Rother Valley Golf Centre and a member of the 2000 Support Team, is seen modelling the fleece in one of the Old Course's notorious bunkers.

Redesign provides greater access for disabled

The third course at Moor Park, operated by Three Rivers District Council as a public course now has its revised and renovated facilities - 18-holes course, 9-holes par 3 course and Academy, recently opened by Trevor Brooking, Chairman of the Sports Council.

The golf centre has been re-designed by Swan Golf Designs, golf course architects, to add to The Old Harry Colt designed course with a refurbished short course and a custom designed area with chipping and bunker practice complexes and a three tier putting green set to test all kinds of player with greatly varying abilities.

The project has been a partnership between The Local Authority and The Sports Lottery Fund who contributed nearly £400,000 towards the cost of the works, undertaken by John Greasley. Tees and bunkers throughout have been re-designed to allow access for disabled players and wheelchair users.

John Philp, Links Superintendent at Carnoustie's Golf Courses recently received his MBE for services to golf at Buckingham Palace and a couple of days later received a surprise presentation from his greenkeeping staff down on the golf course, writes Terry MacCallum of Carnoustie Championship Course Foreman, John Beattie, explained that the staff had got together and, using many of John Philp's most quoted phrases, had compiled a poem to mark his honour from the Queen as well as his achievements with the Carnoustie Courses.

"The poem was devised by the boys," he said.

The verses were superimposed on a computer-generated picture of John standing alongside James Braid, a five-times Open winner, who looked after the courses in the 1920s. The framed poem was handed over at a surprise ceremony at the 10th hole.

John also received a presentation bottle of malt whisky and a cake, suitably decorated with a golfing theme. His wife Helen was also invited and was presented with a bouquet.

John said that the whole thing had come as a complete surprise, but confessed that the ceremony on the golf course on which he and his colleagues work so hard meant more to him than the visit to Buckingham Palace.

"But at least I knew I was going to Buckingham Palace," he quipped. "I knew nothing about all this."

His wife, Helen, added, "This means so much more when it comes from his own staff, the people he is with all the time."

When asked if the staff would be tasting the cake, John said that he thought they might have an early finish in order to sample it - which prompted several of his greenkeepers to question whether he had already been sampling the whisky!
Top award for Reaseheath student

Reaseheath College greenkeeping student, Adrian Moss, has recorded an outstanding achievement in a City & Guilds qualification. Adrian, Deputy Head Greenkeeper at Shrewsbury Golf Club, has been awarded a Silver Medal for Excellence for his work at NVQ Level 3 in Amenity Horticulture Sports Turf Maintenance.

The award is the highest accolade possible and Adrian was the only greenkeeper in the north-west to be selected as a prizewinner. The works of 205 students nationwide from different types of industry were chosen for special distinction.

Adrian has attended Reaseheath College in Nantwich one day each week, basing his academic studies on the practical duties he carries out at his workplace.

Greenkeeping lecturer, Martin Smith, said: "Adrian is typical of the quality of student attracted here. I am delighted that his high standard of work has been recognised."

Adrian Moss receives his Silver Medal from Dr Nick Carey (right) watched by his Course Manager Robbie Konieczka (left)

Gallacher opens new Oatridge course

Former Ryder Cup Captain, Bernard Gallacher, opened Oatridge College’s new 9-hole golf course. He is seen here at the course pictured with Head Greenkeeper Andrew Forrest.

Gallacher opens new Oatridge course

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