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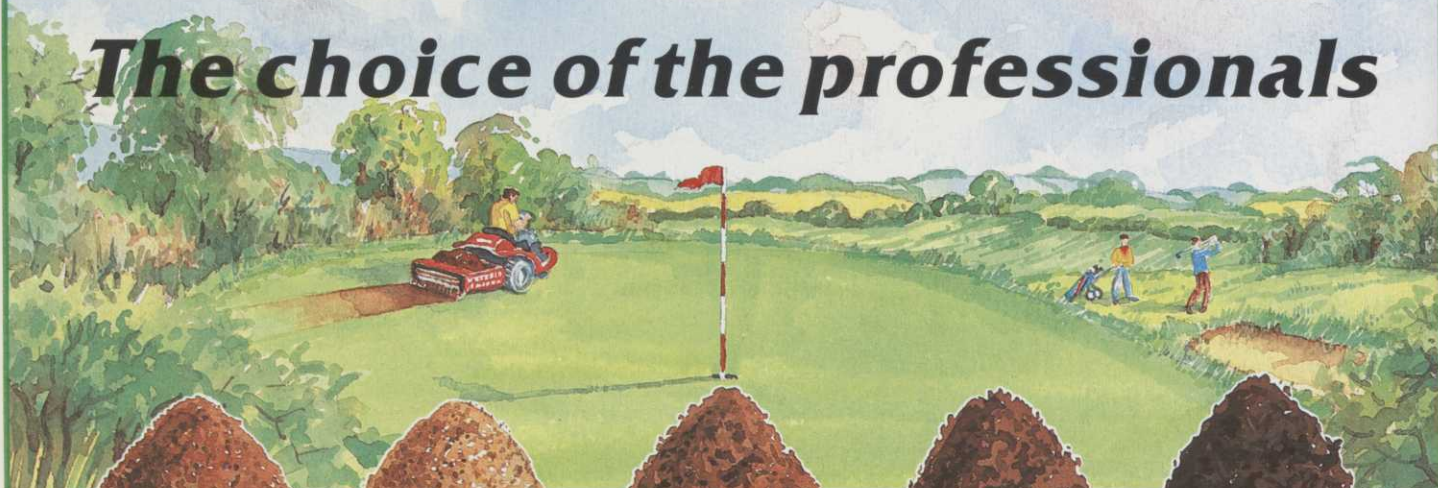
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Official publication of the British & International Golf Greenkeepers Association

SEPTEMBER 1991



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Golf Greenkeepers Association

# GREENKEEPER

International

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### COVER PICTURES:

Two of the National Tournament's leading lights, against a background of Royal St. David's

Who and what are moving on and moving in, in the greenkeeping industry

■ The regulating authority for golf course architecture has amended its name to that of the British Institute of Golf Course Architects, previously known by the 'Association' nomenclature. Founded in 1970, the Institute concerned itself with the aim of eliminating the risks posed to the profession and clients by inadequately trained and experienced designers. A financial grant from the R&A has just been made towards training its students.

■ Graeme MacNiven called from Germany with news of those 'Rover Boys' – the intrepid warriors who left Surrey to set up camp in Munich in 1988. Graeme and brother Ian completed construction of the Munich course in 1989 and within three months the BMW Open was held – declared to be the youngest course with the youngest course manager (23) and the youngest head greenkeeper (20). Now they and the crew are on to other things: Adrian Locke now with Kevin Munt, Nick Aylwin and Paul Doughty to Golf Club Schloss under Graeme's father Kenneth and Ian onto a project near Zurich. Robert Coombe is working in construction with Southern Golf.

Pictured, from left at the BMW Open – Adrian Locke, Nick Aylwin, Graeme MacNiven, winner Paul Azinger, Ian MacNiven, Paul Doughty and Robert Coombe.

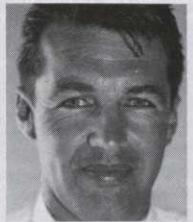


■ It's hard to keep the golfing McMillan's out of the news for long, and our congratulations go to Stuart and Elizabeth McMillan on the occasion of their recent nuptials.

■ Now let's turn to a completely new McMillan model – Hannah Louise – born under the Leo star to Karen and Ian McMillan in the early hours of July 26th. Our regional spy, Phil Baldock, reliably informs us that both mother and daughter are doing fine, with Ian ecstatic though a little bleary eyed.

■ Another newcomer is (belatedly) announced with the arrival of David Lloyd, son to Robert and Andrea Needham of Wortley GC. Weighing in at nearly nine pounds, the young Arien bruiser arrived just before the witching hour of midnight on March 29th.

■ Andy Church, formerly Head Grounds Manager at Tottenham Hotspur FC, has been appointed Sports Turf Consultant by Lawn Technology Ltd, specifically to lead a drive into a sports and leisure market sector which has already become a key area of specialisation for Lawn Technology Ltd. Church is well qualified. As well as his 10 years at White Hart Lane, he also turned out for the Club in Combination League games and is a nine handicap golfer.



■ As part of their expansion programme, Supaturf Products Ltd of Narborough, Leicester, have appointed two new Technical Support Representatives: Ian Burton and Matthew Harnan. Ian, pictured right, well experienced within the industry, is appointed to the East, with Matthew, already having worked in Supaturf's sales office during his college

# Flying Divots

An appreciation of what is not always appreciated

## Your chance to make 'em laugh

Prompted by the receipt of an oh-so-corny joke from B.B. & O. correspondent, Ray Clark, the jaded humour of your jaundiced old editor was nudged out of hibernation into actioning yet another competition, this time to discover the best greenkeeping jokes. As long as they are not libellous or positively 'fealthy', the stories could

end up in these pages – perhaps even illustrated by ace cartoonist, John Moran. Prize for the best joke printed between now and January '92 is a bottle of fine malt whisky – to be shared between winner and editor... now there's a joke for a start! Send entries to: The Editor, 13 Firlie Close, Seaford, East Sussex BN25 2HL.

■ **Turning to another idea**, this time for an on-going limerick contest and an opportunity for readers to gain international fame and recognition in print. Inspired by a contest currently taking place in The Independent, I'm offering a monthly prize to the entrant whose golfing limerick is published in Greenkeeper International on a given word theme. For October, mindful of the battle for Ryder Cup honours at Kiawah Island in late September, let me have your "Ryder" limericks. As a

limerick example, here's mine, The Open, based on "Finch" – Ian Baker-Finch:

An Aussie, one I. Baker-Finch  
 Won at Birkdale with nary a finch  
 While others were faltering  
 With cries for much altering  
 Our champ made those greens seem a cinch!

Entries (open to all readers) as above before September 14th please, thereafter as the inspiration takes you. Remember, this will be an on-going contest.

■ **"Would you like to fly** in my beautiful balloon?" is a tune that will have particular significance to Surrey greenkeeper Billy Martin of Wildwood GC, Alford, for it is he that won the prize donated to BIGGA's Surrey section by those progressive people at RFE Turf Machinery Ltd., to take to the air in RFE's own hot air balloon.

Three cheers to them for spirited enterprise in arranging to fly Billy over Wildwood in the middle of September, essentially to take an airborne look at his course, one still under construction. Though no secret, your editor is keeping quiet about the nuts and bolts of the exercise – having been invited to participate with Billy in the flight – but you may bet that come October we'll have a picture story that will literally lift the lid off space travel greenkeeper style!

■ **Couldn't help smiling** at USPGA Winner John Daly's quote of the month: "I just take out my driver, tee up, then Squeaky (his caddie) says KILL" ...and that of Jack Nicklaus on seeing the result... "Goodness gracious. What a coil, what an unbelievable unleashing of power."



**DIVOTS** by Badlegh Dunne

Mornning!... sorry abite the window, didn't hear me shile fore! eh?... well you know you had that confinded walking-man contraption blahsing in your ears... what'cha playing on it? ...Rocking-Rap or something frightful eh?... what? ...Turf-culture exam tape!?... are you studying to be a turfaccinetant? haw! haw! haw! joke!! I say!... aren't you the head-Johnnie here? the ahh... Head-Goalkeeper thingy-Person?... pardon?... oh!... Greenkeeper! Oh yes! that's right... ha! ha!... don't mind me... in one of me funny moods... I blame my Facemaker wires crossed... ruddy-bionic I am!... Oh, by the by!... your um... First-Dissident, sorry! First-Assistant... young Rogerham... nice chap, bit over-chummy with the Mem-sahibs though... yesterday, back of the Clubhice... showing a young filly how to follow-through!... gal wasn't a golfer... he had no club! ha! ha! haargh!!... jammy younga blightah!... Y'know... it reminds me of 1942... Battle of Britain!... what?... no I never flew! I mean the battle between me... and W.A.A.F. officer Goodebody one evening out side Hornchurch in the back of my Bentley!! I said did I tell you abite the vicar and the messerschmid



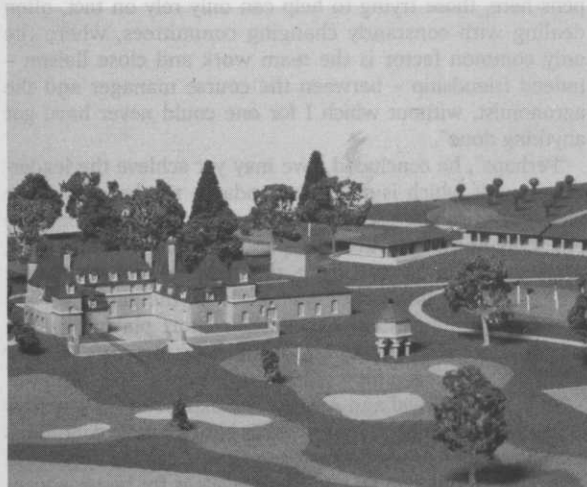
vacation, responsible for the Western region. Both men will liaise with distributors and customers to offer technical support and advice.



■ John Deere Ltd have made two new appointments within their grounds care business: Richard Charleton (above) as Sales Demonstrator/Instructor to provide back-up services to dealers and organise golf course demonstrations, with Howard Storey (left) promoted from Service Training and Marketing in UK and Ireland to Midland Region Grounds Care Territory Manager.

■ Joel Paul, whose trademark is 'Ideas to Reality', is in the golf course construction business in a unique way, having just completed his first golf clubhouse and course in model form. Joel, a sculptor and model craftsman, was commissioned to produce a perfect scale model of Chateau des Vigiers Golf & Country Club in France, with Chairman Lars Petersson now singing the praises of this work of art, which has tremendous commercial advantages in showing planning authorities and environmentalists – not to mention prospective members – how the Club will evolve.

Certainly the model is impressive and though there is no set cost, each depending on a client's brief, Joel's models are a fraction of the vastly expensive models often used in architectural practices. For £5,000 he can model the clubhouse and entire course, working from the same plans given to the golf course constructor by the architect – a good deal cheaper and much more attractive than a boring oil painting of the Club founder – in fact an art investment. Joel's 'phone number is 081 946 0397.



■ Michael Langdon is now the new Sales Manager for Watermation Sprinklers and Controls Ltd., having joined the company in July. This, however, is not Michael's first exposure to Watermation, for as a young man some 15 years ago he worked for the company in several departments. Welcome back, Michael: we wish you well in a growth industry that has seen dramatic advances in the past decade.



■ Honestly guys, you may think your mower is past its prime, but consider that of Roy Masters, a Fakenham blacksmith who won the Ransomes competition to find the oldest working motor mower in the UK. His is a Ransomes 24" Orwell



engined machine dating back to 1905 and used in the grounds surrounding his premises. Presented with a spanking new Ransomes 51 Marquis electric start motor mower, Roy will retire the old 'un to his small forge cum museum, where it will take pride of place.

Eric McCoy, Ransomes M.D. (pictured with Roy Masters) expressed the view that the latest Marquis would give years of trouble-free grasscutting whilst hoping that the 86 year old mower would be given an airing from time to time.

A 26 year association comes to an end shortly when Peter Marnoch retires as head greenkeeper from Coventry Hearsal GC, which he joined in 1965. Peter won the Greenkeepers Championship Trophy at Pyle & Kenfig at the age of 52 when his handicap was two. Peter will continue to play in retirement and family connections will continue with his youngest son, Steven Marnoch, an associate of the British Association of Golf Course Architects. His successor will be Ian Savage, formerly assistant head greenkeeper at the Club.



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# Lessons to be learned

**P**ost mortems have only two useful functions: to identify the cause of death so that future mortality can be avoided and to bring wrong-doers to justice. The corpse in the case of Royal Birkdale was *Poa annua* and the verdict accidental death!

What caused such consternation was not so much the admittedly disappointing appearance of the greens, which seemingly mesmerised many of the players and gave cause for much self-pity – although scores were low and birdies were flying everywhere on the last day – but the crop of rash and ill-considered statements emanating from the mouths of those least qualified to comment.

Such professionals, it seems, consider that expertise in only one aspect of a complicated game gives them the right to opine on all matters agronomic and the end result was a rash of 'instant cures' which the national press were only too pleased to leap upon and publish prominently. These were seen in some quarters, quite erroneously in my view, as an indictment against current British greenkeeping practices.

There are always two sides to a coin, and it is no secret that Royal Birkdale is a members' Club catering to rank and file play over 52 weeks every year. But the course is also an Open Championship venue and the Club must have some input. Did the Club abdicate responsibility one wonders, what caused it to happen, what led to the problem, how can it be avoided? I was in a mood to ask questions and quizzed many for non-emotive answers.

Turning first to the Sports Turf Research Institute, advisers to the R&A on The Championship and agronomists to the Club, I was disappointed not to gain some insight, but was told that the Institute are in active discussion with the R&A and will issue an explanatory document in due course. Perhaps this is right and proper, but the world of golf should not be kept waiting too long and one hopes that the report will not be a whitewash, for greenkeepers tell me they desperately want answers.

No-one was more aware of the problems which have plagued this particular course for The Open than Jim Arthur, for nearly two decades the consultant agronomist to the R&A's Championship Committee and even before that when – in his own words – he attempted unsuccessfully between 1946 and 1952 to advise the Club to change their greenkeeping system.

He told of over-reactions (natural enough in the light of their current knowledge) to the disastrous effects of over enthusiastic application of the acid theory to a links course without effective irrigation in the mid-1930s, which swung fertiliser treatment to the other extreme with the gross over-use of complete (NPK) fertiliser. This continued unabated after the War, and indeed even for a few years after the similar 1971 disaster and is confirmed by soil analyses, showing some of the highest phosphate levels on record. The soil under Birkdale's greens could in fact be legally sold as fertiliser!

The inevitable result of such very fertile conditions means annual meadow grass dominance. Jim Arthur expanded: "this may be tolerable if the enemy of good greenkeeping is not overstressed, e.g. by shaving greens to achieve faster speeds, but a change to austere greenkeeping, as practiced on our best links courses, literally kills the *Poa annua*."

by DAVID WHITE



**'This disaster – which is not too strong a word for it – may yet do good on three counts'**

– Jim Arthur

**'The problems of this particular championship course have been well known and documented over a number of years. As such, criticism of the present head greenkeeper is not justified'**

– Neil Thomas

"This year the problem was exacerbated but not caused – just before The Open – by a sudden and severe drop in mowing height and related treatments to achieve faster speeds. There are also complicating factors in buried thatch creating stagnation and inhibiting deep root development. This disaster (which is not too strong a word for it) may yet do good on three counts.

"One – the apologists for annual meadow grass must surely accept that it is not capable of producing top conditions. It may be inevitable but it is not nice! Generously fed and watered, it may be satisfactory for members' golf in summer but in the UK we play more under winter than summer conditions.

"Two – the insatiable demand by the professionals for faster and faster putting surfaces must be curbed. There are other ways to speed up greens than shaving them to below an eighth – by use of turf rollers for example – and conditions are, after all, the same for all competitors.

"Three – the ignorance of nearly all top players about greenkeeping, which resulted in so many foolish pieces of advice as to cause and cure of this problem, is exposed and they must learn to keep quiet to avoid the scorn of those who do know".

Continuing further, Jim suggested the proposals mooted that the R&A should enforce standards are unrealistic, "because British Clubs are a law unto themselves and do not consider they have to take orders from anyone, in contrast to America, where the USGA take over completely and control management via the Green Section's agronomists, as well as administration of the course selected. Until that happens here, those trying to help can only rely on tact, often dealing with constantly changing committees, where the only common factor is the team work and close liaison – indeed friendship – between the course manager and the agronomist, without which I for one could never have got anything done".

"Perhaps", he concluded, "we may yet achieve the leadership in golf which is so lacking today – not because those guiding British golf do not realise the need for it but because of the jealously guarded independence of our Clubs. The greatest threat comes from the professionals who are increasingly imposing their standards on the game, yet are singularly uninterested outside their short playing season here and are increasingly out of touch with today's all year round UK greenkeeping problems and cures.

"At least the Royal and Ancient is making serious attempts and generous contributions towards better course conditions but can at best guide and encourage – it cannot impose its will. The need above all and at all levels is for better educa-



at Royal Birkdale for The Open Championship



tion, even more of professionals and those tipping their caps to them, than of greenkeepers”.

Turning from Jim Arthur, I asked Neil Thomas for comment from BIGGA's viewpoint. Neil suggested that “the structure is now in place to ensure a uniformity of approach and the soon to be appointed Technical Panel of the Joint Golf Course Committee should be charged with the task of laying down guidelines and setting standards for the future maintenance and preparation of The Championship courses.

“Naturally there must be full co-operation with each Club and the interests of Club members will be a vital matter for consideration. Long term planning is essential and progress should be monitored by the Panel. The time span before The Open returns to a particular course allows the implementation of such planning. Over a period of time there would be substantial improvements in the condition of these courses and much relieving of pressure on the course managers concerned. The Association firmly believes that whilst there may be historic reasons for present inadequacies in standards, they must now be tackled and resources made available from within the game to ensure long term planning takes place”.

Commenting on the specific criticisms levelled at the greens of Royal Birkdale, BIGGA's Executive Director pointed out “that the problems of this particular championship course have been well known and documented over a number of years. As such, criticism of the present head greenkeeper is not justified – he worked within established guide-lines in presenting the course for The Open, but in terms of preparing the greens he was clearly not working from an ideal base.”

As a final comment, Neil Thomas added that within the ranks of BIGGA there is much practical knowledge that can be brought to bear which will enhance the future presentation of championship courses. It is hoped that the new Technical Panel will make full use of this knowledge and that the game as a whole will quickly recognise the validity of the comment made in ‘The Way Forward’ ...that BIGGA ‘must become the central reference point for all other golfing bodies on matters pertaining to greenkeepers and greenkeeping’.

Speed greed, it seems, is the main and immediate culprit in this saga and it is sad to see so many of our erstwhile wonderful links and heathland courses losing the character of their greens due to such shaving tactics – often for months on end – in the insane chase for slick and trick, when in the end they finish being slower and trouble-prone. Why should Club members suffer (assuming they want to retain the ideals of firm, fast, true greens all year round) merely to satisfy a handful of not very far-thinking professionals, most of whom couldn't care less about any course the day after they have finished playing their tournament?

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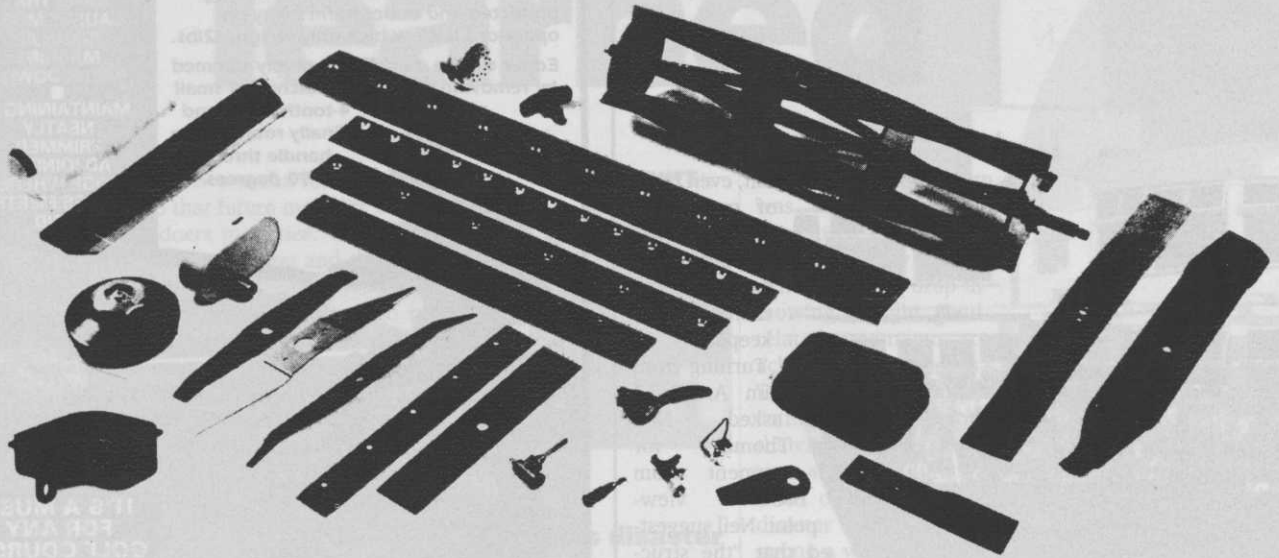
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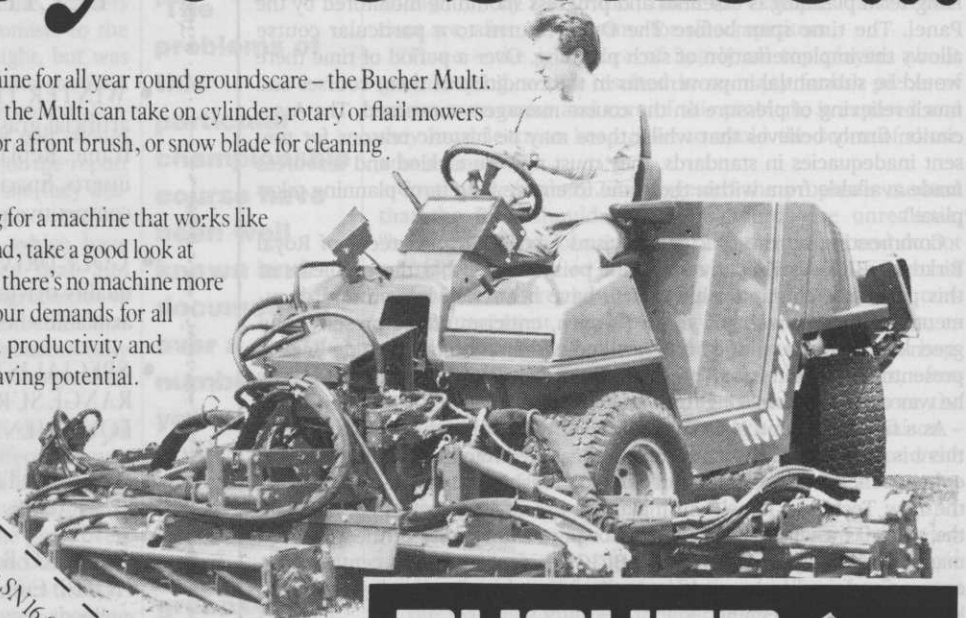
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# Student GREENKEEPER OF THE YEAR

To be selected as a candidate for Toro/PGA European Tour Student Greenkeeper of the Year Awards can do different things to different people. For some it heralds an outbreak of nervous tension that can only disperse when the final assessment is made and the winner announced. For others it offers a rare opportunity to show the world what they're made of. For one - the Toro PGA European Tour Student Greenkeeper of the Year - it will open doors that hitherto could be thought of only as part of a fertile imagination.

The simple facts disclosed here offer nothing more than a taste of the young talent proffered by the 13 Approved Colleges, who have selected these young men as rightful candidates - in their opinion the cream of the crop - for this singularly important honour. That they have been selected is indicative of their individual excellence in training for a noble and honourable profession - GREENKEEPING.

Just one man will collect the top prize, a Toro sponsored expenses paid visit to the USA which combines residential student membership for six weeks at the Winter School for Turf Grass Managers, held at The University of Massachusetts. Others, runners-up in the awards, will accompany the PGA European Tour's Support team attending two tournaments selected from the 1992 Tour programme.

Results will be announced after the candidates attend their panel interviews at Aldwark Manor on October 21st.

## The candidates

### CHRISTOPHER LEWIS

*Nominated by Warwickshire College of Agriculture*

Christopher, aged 29, is an excellent example of how re-direction in a career can come good. Chris joined the RAF on leaving grammar school and carved an exemplary record in the force, remained until a sporting injury forced him to cut short his service career in 1987. Following a resettlement programme and a brief flirtation with the haulage industry, Chris took stock and decided to become a greenkeeper. For him that meant training to a

fine edge, with Warwickshire College his mentor. Golf had been 'in the family' and his step father, a former Club secretary, offered wise counsel.

Joining Scraftoft GC as an assistant greenkeeper, Chris fulfilled the confidence placed in him by sailing through the City & Guilds Phase II in Turf Culture, earning high praise from course tutor Andrew Cole.

Despite a busy work schedule and entry into Turf Culture Phase III, Chris finds time to play golf and indulge in watersports.



### ARNE van AMERONGEN

*Nominated by Cheshire College of Horticulture*

Arne is a Dutchman who first began greenkeeping in 1985, working alongside an English greenkeeper, Bill Garner, in Holland. The bug must have bitten deeply, for since then Arne has set his sights high in his thirst for greater knowledge and understanding of a career that, in his view, has no limits. He is presently head greenkeeper with the British Army Golf Club in Sennelager, Germany.

Studying at Reaseheath, he has just completed his

Phase II in Greenkeeping, during which time his tutor, Dennis Mortram, tells of an enthusiasm that knew no boundaries, coupled with an infectious and winning personality that made him a firm favourite amongst staff and fellow pupils alike.

Summarising, Arne is of that new breed of European, one with high ideals and even higher goals. As such his nomination - perhaps the first of many 'Internationals' and bringing the 'International' part of BIGGA's title well to the fore - is welcomed.



### TERRY FARKINS

*Nominated by Cannington College*

Terry is 26 years old and has been a greenkeeper since leaving school, for the past eight years with Torquay Golf Club - a parkland course on heavy Devon clay - where he is first assistant.

In 1989 he started the City and Guilds Phase II in Greenkeeping and plans to progress to Phase III in 1992.

Like all good greenkeepers, Terry plays as hard as he

works and featured in the Minor Counties Cricket Team for Devon in 1987 and 1988, together with captaincy of the County at Youth level. He plays golf to a handicap of 12 and is looking to devote more time to this side of his sporting interests, not only for the pleasure it gives but to understand the finer points of course strategy, which may then be applied in his greenkeeping career.

His ambitions are to become a good professional head greenkeeper and make Samantha, his wife of just one month, justifiably proud of him.





# Which way now for the lucky 13?

## **BRIAN STORY**

*Nominated by Elmwood College*

We can do no better than quote Brian's tutor, Carol Borthwick, who writes: Brian is an outstanding student who has now completed his third year with us, gaining all his modules with relative ease. His work throughout has been to a very high standard.

He has already achieved the Supervisory Modules through our Distant Learning Course, which he achieved over and above his block release course. He is regularly

on stage at our awards presentations and was praised highly by Lord Whitelaw, a member at Silloth on Solway, the course where Brian is a greenkeeper.

Brian is 23, but definitely has a much older head on him. He has been at Silloth since 1984 and now that he is finished with college on a regular basis, wishes to pursue his ambition to become a course manager at an Open Championship venue. He is a keen golfer with a handicap of 2, playing regularly for the Cumbria County Golf Team.



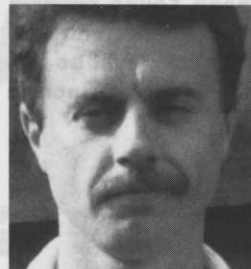
## **ROBERT WILKINSON**

*Nominated by the Welsh College of Horticulture*

Robert has been a greenkeeper for five years, progressing throughout that time at his Club, Llanwern Golf Club in Newport, where he is now first assistant. He has just completed two years at the Welsh College where he was successful in completing Phase II in Greenkeeping and Sportsturf Management, a course where tutor Graham Wright tells of great enthusiasm and the setting of very high standards.

With Phase II complete, Robert has his sights set on completion of Phase III with an ultimate goal of becoming a successful course manager.

Like many attracted to greenkeeping, Robert is a golfer as well as enjoying football and an interest in steam trains. A Welshman steaming ahead, so to speak!



## **PATRICK WHELEMAN**

*Nominated by Sparsholt College Hampshire*

A third year student in Greenkeeping, Patrick is 26 years old and has been greenkeeping for four and a half years, all of which in the employ of the West Berkshire Golf Club.

Patrick's tutor, Bob Young, writes of him in glowing terms, telling of an enthusiasm and dedication for work study that has seen him progress rapidly to the position of head greenkeeper, a post he has proudly held for 16

months. Also a passionate golfer, Patrick is a member of West Berkshire where he plays to a handicap of six. His immediate ambitions are to complete the reconstruction of his home course and to see it recognised as one of the best in the south of England. Creditable indeed!



## **MARK ELLIS**

*Nominated by Oaklands College, Hertfordshire*

Mark Ellis is a familiar figure at BIGGA events, most recently as a part of the support team at The Open and at BIGGA's National Championships as a keen left-hander with an impressive swing and a happy countenance.

Mark has recently completed his Phase II Greenkeeping and Sports Turf Management and is fortunate in having achieved one ambition already – that of working on a Championship golf course – for he works with

course manager Neil Whitaker at the prestigious Woburn course.

The experiences of working on the preparation for several major championship events, including the Dunhill British Masters and the Ladies British Open, have been invaluable and set him well on the way to his ultimate long term ambition – that of becoming a course manager in his own right on a top class championship layout.



## **ANDREW McDOWELL**

*Nominated by Langside College*

Andrew entered the greenkeeping profession by the now well-known route of a Youth Opportunities Programme followed by selection for one season by the East Kilbride District Council, a progressive local authority with inexpensive golf on public courses as a priority of their manifesto. That one season became a permanency and to begin Andrew worked on Langdales Golf course, where he remained until June 1990. Now at

Torrance House Golf Club, also an E.K.D.C. course, as first assistant, he has just completed Phases I-III in Sports Turf Management on a day release programme.

Andrew is a keen though struggling golfer, handicap 20, and when not at work or on the course is to be found motorcycling to other courses on his beloved 350cc Yamaha, where he enjoys observing different management methods.

