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August 1999

Your next issue of Greenkeeper International will be with you by September 6, 1999

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BTME 2000
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Win £50 with our Buyers' Guide quiz
John Philp was described as "a greenkeeper out of control" by David Duval. He was accused of fertilising the rough by several experienced pros and, if some rumours are to be believed, is a close relation of the Marquis de Sade.

In fact all John had done - in conjunction with his own Links Management Committee and the R&A - was to bring a fine old links back into tip top condition and provide a challenge few of the professionals had ever faced before. The fairways were a little tighter than was perhaps comfortable and sure the rough was...well rough, but the Angus area has been particularly wet and grass tends to grow in those types of conditions.

The players had launched their media offensive against the course well before the week started. The winning total was by all accounts going to be around 300. Well, 29 players broke 300 and the winning total, matched by three players, was the equivalent of two 72s and two 73s. Not too outrageous.

But isn't the score irrelevant? Isn't the idea to identify the Champion? The man who mastered the conditions the best? What score did O'Meara shoot to win at Birkdale last year? I'm blown if I can remember, and frankly it doesn't matter.

Jean van de Velde played the best golf for 71 holes and would have been a deserving champion. Paul Lawrie was superb in the play-off and as a result is a deserving champion - someone who won The Open not just the beneficiary of someone's sad stumble.

So why the criticism?

You don't hear cyclists in the Tour de France, which was running at the same time as The Open, complaining to the organisers that a particular climb was too steep. They get on with it. Skiers tackling the fearsome Hannenkamm mountain in the annual downhill race take pride in completing the course. They don't look at their times and say we only averaged 55mph and not 65mph, as we usually do, so the spectators are being shortchanged.

Even Formula One drivers, who one might forgive for prima donnish tendencies, usually blame the set up of their cars rather than the layout of the track for disappointing times.

Professional golfers get many advantages not open to club golfers. In The Open they have ball spotters on every hole. They get free drops, line of sight rulings, they get someone to carry their bag, cars to pick them up from their hotels...The list goes on, yet still they moan.

John Philp and his team did a tremendous job at Carnoustie and the set-up of the course showed real imagination. Sure it was tight, but it was not unplayable, and in the end it produced an Open which will be remembered for many years to come.

Coupled with the fine new hotel it surely has guaranteed Carnoustie a permanent place back on The Open rota...even if the very thought will cause some nightmares.
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Neil Thomas takes a personal look back at Viscount Whitelaw's involvement with BIGGA which started back in the early days of the Association.

**Viscount Whitelaw 1918–1999**

Much has been written and spoken recently of the life and times of Viscount Whitelaw. Naturally this has concentrated on his place in the post-war life of the country, but it would be a shame not to mention his wartime service in the Scots Guards where he won the Military Cross in the Normandy campaign. His career in Government was long and distinguished including service as Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and as Deputy Prime Minister to Margaret Thatcher from 1973 to 1976, and again at Christmas 1987. That illness intervened, albeit one from which he fully recovered, and he stood down as Deputy Prime Minister. It was then that it was our exceedingly good fortune that he agreed to take on the Presidency of BIGGA.

The connection with BIGGA came directly from his love of golf and lifetime interest in the game. An outstanding player in his younger days and a Cambridge blue in 1939, he regarded as one of his greatest honours being made Captain of the Royal and Ancient Golf Club in 1969. Early in 1988, we made an approach through the R&A to ascertain whether Viscount Whitelaw would consider taking on the role of President of BIGGA at a time when he was relinquishing some of his parliamentary duties and responsibilities. It was a great boost to our fledgling Association when he kindly agreed but this agreement came with a proviso. He indicated that he would only take up our cause and it was a source of great pleasure to him to see the opening of BIGGA House in 1988, we made an approach to his room at the House of Lords and this enabled me to meet with him and discuss BIGGA affairs on many occasions over a ten year period. I count myself very lucky. In 1988 I was in some awe of him for here was a man who has been described as a “towering figure” in politics and who was most certainly one of the foremost politicians of the last 50 years. I need not have worried as from the start he was steadfast in his support, giving strong backing during our early, difficult years.

Perhaps it was presumptuous on my part, but I came to regard him as a friend and a ready listener who would always provide wise and sound counsel from his standpoint as President. Occasionally as the years went by he was happy to touch on a current political issue with me, but essentially he wanted to talk of greenkeeping and greengrocers and he never wavered in seeking the betterment of the golfing world proved of inestimable benefit to the Association. A word with Viscount Whitelaw on the opening of BIGGA HOUSE in 1988, we made an approach to his room at the House of Lords and this enabled me to meet with him and discuss BIGGA affairs on many occasions over a ten year period. I count myself very lucky. In 1988 I was in some awe of him for here was a man who has been described as a “towering figure” in politics and who was most certainly one of the foremost politicians of the last 50 years. I need not have worried as from the start he was steadfast in his support, giving strong backing during our early, difficult years.

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Textron set to travel back in time

Textron Turf Care and Specialty Products has stepped in to assist the organisers of a World War II Air Show, offering to prepare the airfield for the prestigious event which takes place next month.

Raydon Airfield, at Hadleigh in Suffolk, is a former wartime USAF base that was once home to the Mustangs and Thunderbolts of the 353rd Fighter Group.

On September 4th the Raydon Wings Air Show will take place when the skies over Suffolk will once again be filled with the sound of over 30 classic wartime aircraft of yesteryear. Textron has stepped in and offered to cut and prepare the 15-acre grass site including the maintenance of the 900 yard runway.

“Our involvement followed an appeal from the organisers and it was one that we could hardly refuse especially as the profits will be used for the benefit of local charities. We will be preparing the runway and surrounding areas throughout the summer to ensure that Raydon Airfield is in pristine condition for the show in September,” said Peter Bell, of Textron.

John Deere set record in Ireland

Where the Mountains of Mourne sweep down to the sea - that’s the location of one of the most beautiful and challenging golf courses in the world.

Ranked four in Britain and seven in the world, The Royal County Down championship links course by the Irish Sea at Newcastle, Northern Ireland, was host to the prestigious British Amateur Championship at the end of May and will welcome the amateur home internationals in September.

Despite the extremes of weather during the Amateur the immaculate condition of the course was noted by players and commentators alike. This was due to the hard work of Course Manager Alan Strachan and his greenkeeping staff of 15, with the help of a recently extended fleet of John Deere golf course equipment.

The course has just added two 3235A fairway mowers, three 220A walk-behind greens mowers, a Turf Gator utility vehicle and a 1200A bunker rake worth nearly £70,000 to the existing fleet of two 6x4 Gators, three more walk-behind greens mowers and a tractor-mounted Aercore aerator. This is the biggest sale of John Deere equipment to a golf course in Northern Ireland by local dealer Johnston Gilpin & Co of Lisburn.

“We hand cut all the greens and tees with the 220A greens mowers, which is why we now have six altogether,” said Alan.

The picture shows Randal McConnell, of Johnston Gilpin & Co (far right) with Course Manager, Alan Strachan (second right) and some of the staff with the Mourne Mountains in the background.

Stop press...Stop press...Stop

After over 10 years BIGGA has decided to change its logo from the distinctive world/golf ball spheres and flags, which have stood the Association in good stead, to something more appropriate for the new millennium...

No, no don’t worry. The above is a joke designed to see the colour drain from the cheeks of Craig Pennycuick.

Craig, Head Greenkeeper at Winterfield GC, in Dunbar, is so delighted to be a member of BIGGA that he has had the logo tattooed on his left leg.

Unless he pulls his socks up he’ll be seen as one of the Association’s more committed members.

Can anyone else match Craig’s devotion? Logo over a heart maybe!
Honorary Membership for Fred

Revered golf course architect Fred Hawtree has become an Honorary Member of BIGGA, only the fourth time such an honour has been bestowed. In doing so Fred, 83, joins the late Viscount Whitelaw, Jim Fry and Brian Gibb.

It was Fred’s father, also Fred, who was the founder of the first greenkeeper association, BGGA, in 1912 and, along with his wife Beatrice, he administered the Association from the Hawtree offices. Fred’s father, known as F. G. to his son’s E. W., was also the second President of the BGGA succeeding the Chairman of the News of World newspaper, Lord Riddell.

“Lord Riddell was a very keen golfer who played with all the top golfers and wanted to help golf,” recalled Fred, as he sat in his Woodstock study adorned with golfing books and artifacts. Indeed the News of the World Trophy donated by Lord Riddell himself will be played for in the new BIGGA Golf Championship.

“I always got the feeling that my father, deep down, wanted to promote golf for the ordinary people because it was very restricted around his time,” explained Fred, who edited one of the first greenkeeper magazines for a time and wrote a regular column in the BGGA magazine before BIGGA was formed.

He is delighted with the way BIGGA has developed from the merging of the three original associations.

“I think the association has progressed wonderfully. It is everything you could have hoped for.”

His own reflections of greenkeepers go back to 1922 when he was just a young boy and a tournament at Sunridge Park.

“Charlie Prickett, the greenkeeper at Frilford Heath, was playing and he put half a crown in my hand. In 1922 that was a fortune and I thought these greenkeepers really are wonderful chaps.”

It was fitting that the presentation of the Certificate should be made by Gordon Child, in whose house Fred was enjoying dinner when the call to say that BIGGA had been formed came through. “I am absolutely delighted to make this presentation as I’ve known Fred for so many years, Marion and I call him Uncle Fred,” said Gordon.

The Hawtree practice continues under the leadership of son, Martin, a past President of the British Institute of Golf Course Architects.

New MD for Scotts UK Professional

The Scotts Company has appointed Bernie Ford to the position of Managing Director of Scotts Professional Business Group UK and Ireland.

The company was created following the acquisition of Levington Horticulture and Miracle Garden Care by the Scotts Company in 1997 and markets key brands such as Sierrablen, Sierraf orm and Greenmaster turf fertilisers and the pioneering new turf growth regulator Shortcut.

Bernie Ford has held a number of international Sales and Marketing positions with The Scotts Company over the past 21 years, covering consumer and professional markets. He has extensive experience with Osmocote controlled release fertilisers and established major markets for this brand in South America, Malaysia and the Caribbean.

He is married with two children and will be relocating from Ohio to the UK.

What do you get the greenkeeper who has everything?

That was the question posed to Clive Tilbury of Darenth Valley GC, when deciding what to get his boss, Nigel Stapley, to commemorate 22 years at the club - 12 as Course Manager.

One thing Clive knew he didn’t have was a mini mower so that’s exactly what was presented to Nigel. “You can imagine how long it would take to do 18 greens with that! Mind you it doesn’t use much fuel.” said Nigel.

New Chairman at BAGCC

The British Association of Golf Course Constructors have elected Nigel Ely as their new chairman. Nigel is a director of J & E Ely Ltd., whose recent construction work includes the new 18-hole Palmerstone course at Brocket Hall, designed by Donald Steel.
Personal goal leaves Peter triumphant

Retired Kent Section member Peter Bisoe put a recent heart bypass operation behind him to win his Club Championship. Peter, 64-year-old whose handicap is now 12, shot rounds of nett 63 and 71 to finish on 7 under par and win the Warren GC Championship and, under the rules of the event, had to endure an 18-hole play-off before coming out on top. "I'm surprised, elated and, understandably, knackered," said Peter, who also won the Kent Seniors Championship a few years ago.

New chairman of SGA elected

The newly elected chairman of the Swedish Greenkeepers Association is Rolf Lowgren who replaces Roland Anderson who has moved from his Course Manager's job to become Toro representative for the Southern Sweden dealer. Rolf is Course Manager of Bro-Balsta Golf course West of Stockholm, and is very well known in Sweden with his background as an agronomist in Swedish Golf Federation 1977-1989 and then, more recently becoming a Course Manager.

The rest of the board was reelected and SGA's 1200 members can look forward for the first time in a very long period to have a high lighting coming up in September with a Conference and Trade Show in Jonköping in mid-south Sweden. This show is a biannual arrangement where his responsibility for the entire tractor business has been formed following the announcement of Charterhouse Turf Machinery's appointment as the exclusive Distributor for Toro Turf Maintenance Machinery. Charterhouse Turf Machinery Ltd and Antonio Carraro Spa have signed an exclusive distribution contract for Charterhouse Turf Machinery to distribute their range of tractors throughout England, Wales, Northern Ireland and The Irish Republic. Antonio Carraro Spa have been manufacturing tractors in Padova since 1901 and employ 400 staff. They have over 118 tractors in their range and Charterhouse Turf Machinery have selected the most appropriate for the UK markets. These are niche products which have been selected in particular for golf, local authority, contracting forestry and nursery markets. Charterhouse Turf Machinery will also be importing a full range of ancillary equipment which can be used with the tractors in question.

Another feature of the equipment is that they are all articulated in the horizontal plane and some models are also pivoted about a centre point. "I am pleased to welcome Charterhouse Turf Machinery into our worldwide family of distributors and feel they will be able to expand sales throughout their territory," said Dr Marcello Carraro, Managing Director of Antonio Carraro Spa.

David Jenkins, Managing Director of Charterhouse Turf Machinery said he was delighted to have such a high performance range of tractors to 'market'. "I feel sure that the marketing skills contained within Charterhouse Turf Machinery would enable the company to achieve a significant percentage of the UK tractor sales."

Scottish Golf Course Advisory Group has it in the bag

The Scottish Golf Course Advisory Group has been working hard over a number of years to improve the environmental quality of Scottish Golf Courses. This important initiative has been supported by the introduction of 'Golf Bags' to more than 50 sites throughout Scotland. The Golf Bags do not contain clubs, balls or clothing, rather, they contain a wealth of information on environmental management and environmentally aware golf course design, including books, videos, leaflets and case studies.

More information on the Golf Bags, including the location of your nearest Golf Bag Manager and general advice on all aspects of conservation on golf courses can be obtained from the Scottish Golf Course Wildlife Advisor, c/o Scottish Natural Heritage, 2 Anderson Place, Leith, Edinburgh, EH6 5NP, 0131 3549797.

Colin moves to Charterhouse

Colin Gregory, previously with Hardi and Twose, has joined Charterhouse Turf Machinery. Colin joins the company to head up the new Tractor Division which has been formed following the announcement of Charterhouse Turf Machinery's appointment as the exclusive Distributor for Antonio Carraro Spa, who are manufacturing tractors in Padova, Italy. Colin has over 118 tractors in their range and Charterhouse Turf Machinery have selected the most appropriate for the UK markets. These are niche products which have been selected in particular for golf, local authority, contracting forestry and nursery markets. Charterhouse Turf Machinery will also be importing a full range of ancillary equipment which can be used with the tractors in question.

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New UK Sales Manager at Toro Turf Maintenance

Toro Commercial Products' distributor Ley UK, in St Neots, has appointed Jeff Anguige as the new UK Sales Manager for Toro Turf Maintenance Machinery. Jeff, 42, has wide experience of the industry, having spent his entire 24 year career in the turf equipment business.

His experience includes, unusually, spells working both for the dealer and manufacturer sides of the industry. This is something he sees as especially valuable in his new role for Toro, where his responsibility for the entire sales operation covers retail business and sales through dealers as well.

Therefore his wide-ranging responsibilities include managing Ley UK's retail sales team, as well as the sales force of business managers working closely with the national networks of dealers and service centres. It is an all-encompassing brief that sees him also in charge of overseeing its business with Toro key accounts.

In the year before joining up with Toro, Jeff Anguige worked for Textron on sales of Ransomes Jacobsen and Iseki.

A man with a thorough grounding and wide knowledge of turf machinery and the machinery business, he began his career 24 years ago as an apprentice in the workshops of a leading local Ransomes' dealership in Morley, near Leeds, before moving on to become a sales representative with the firm. He later worked his way up to become sales director with another Yorkshire dealership before taking up a two-year appointment with a machinery manufacturer prior to joining Ransomes.

Jeff Anguige, his wife Julie and their daughter Carly, 16, and son Ryan, 14, live near Wakefield, in Yorkshire.