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May 1999

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As I see it.
Gordon Child gives another insight into the life of a hectar Chairman

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Investing in the future

Smugness is not regarded as an attractive trait, but hopefully, you will forgive BIGGA's staff for feeling just a little bit smug at the moment.

The reason is that we've just achieved the Investor in People Standard. That means that independent assessors have come in, looked at the way we conduct BIGGA's business and gone away impressed.

So that's why we've been walking around wearing Cheshire Cat-sized grins.

Like most things worth having, it involved some extremely hard work as we had to be prepared for anything and everything to be put under the microscope and examined. Not only that, with so many of the staff interviewed, everyone had to up to scratch and prepared.

Personally, I believe that the achievement of reaching the required standard was merely the icing on the cake. The real benefit came from the process of preparing for it.

Instead of running to stand still - a physical pursuit in which so many of us indulge, but for which we never seem to see any benefit when we step on the scales - we forced ourselves to stop and make time to examine every aspect of BIGGA's work.

Often we were pleasantly surprised by what was in place, but occasionally we uncovered something which perhaps we'd taken for granted for too long.

In those instances we were able to strip it down and come up with a new and improved system.

So, in effect, even if we had failed to reach the exacting standards imposed by Investors in People at the first attempt, we had improved our way of operating anyway.

It is a little like the Master Greenkeeper certification, and anyone who enters the three main BIGGA competitions - the Toro Award for Excellence in Greenkeeping, the Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year and the BIGGA Golf Environment Competition, in association with Amazone and Grass Roots.

It is not just those people who smile - not necessarily as smugly as the BIGGA HOUSE staff - from the pages of Greenkeeper International who have won. Everyone who has entered, and put themselves up for actual or potential scrutiny, comes away with something.

This may come in the way of formal feedback following an inspection or, more informally, from talking with people involved. Or it may just come from examining your own work and devising a better, more efficient, method.

The bottom line is that, when you do anything that involves being judged, you start to look at yourself and the way you do things, a little more closely. That is the best possible way to improve...even if at the end of the day you don't win anything this time round.

We feel that we've benefited from being involved in Investors in People. So could you by becoming involved in the various BIGGA programmes.

Entries for the three competitions close at the end of this month while information of Master Greenkeeper can be obtained from the Education Department.
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National recognition for BIGGA

BIGGA has achieved one of the most prestigious and nationally respected awards for business excellence.

The Association has gained the Investor in People National Standard which recognises that the Association works actively to improve its performance by linking the planned, efficient development of employees to the achievement of business objectives.

"That we achieved the Investors in People Standard so quickly is a tribute to the systems in place and the quality of staff who operate them. The support of Board members has also contributed to the assessors' positive view of the Association. The achievement will be marked by the presentation of a plaque which will be displayed in BIGGA HOUSE.

BIGGA's success was also recognised by North Yorkshire Training and Enterprise Council.

"Investors in People has been designed by some of the best businesses in the country and by achieving recognition the British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association has shown itself to be among the best," said Bill Johnstone, Head of Business Services.

"Investors in People help businesses to be more efficient, give better customer service and as a result be more profitable," he added.

The achievement will be marked by the presentation of a plaque which will be displayed in BIGGA HOUSE.

BIGGA/GCSAI: Joint statement

Objective

For the two associations to communicate and work together for the benefit of their members and the greenkeeping profession.

The GCSAI is to remain as the main association in the Republic of Ireland giving representation for superintendents, assistants, greenkeepers and apprentices.

BIGGA will likewise reciprocate in Northern Ireland.

Both associations are committed to remaining open and friendly as well as to communicating regularly.

STRI schedules two new courses on turf culture

In a break with tradition, STRI is replacing its annual five day residential training programmes on turf culture for greenkeepers and ground staff with two new courses.

The two courses are scheduled for the Autumn at STRI headquarters in Bingley.

November 15 - 19 "Your Passport to Perfect Courses" for golf greenkeepers.

November 22 - 26 "Your Passport to Perfect Pitches and Playing Surfaces" for grounds management, including turf surfaces, and trade.

The structure of these training programmes allows the delegates much greater flexibility in juggling both their time away from work and costs.

The two training courses each consist of five consecutive one day specialist courses.

Delegates have the choice of attending one or more of the one day courses, relevant to their specific needs.

A range of optional accommodation packages are available for those wishing to stop over in Bingley, with substantial discounts for multiple bookings.

Each training day is split into two distinct sessions. The morning session, presented by STRI research staff, covers facts and up to date information on the latest trends and current thinking.

Delegates have the choice of attending one or more of the one day courses, relevant to their specific needs.

BIGGA mounties friendship with GCSAC

Gordon Child joins Dean Piller, President of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of Canada, in a flag waving exercise prior to the banquet at the GCSAC Conference and Show in Toronto.

Free CD-Rom from Kubota

Kubota is using the second issue of its Owners Club magazine to launch a free CD-ROM entitled 'Kubota - Putting people first'.

Attached to the front cover of the magazine, the CD-ROM uses pictures, graphics and commentary to describe Kubota's worldwide environmental policy before moving on to focus on the company's development, new products, services and the customer support.

Suitable for playing on a PC or an Apple Macintosh computer, the CD-ROM presentation runs for 14 minutes.

The magazine, with CD-ROM attached, is being mailed to all registered members of the Kubota Owners Club. Membership of the club is available free of charge to all new and existing owners of any Kubota product.

2nd BIGGA Golf Directory

It is intended that the second edition of the BIGGA Golf Directory will include BIGGA member information in addition to the trade information on which the first Directory was based.

The proposed format would involve members' names being listed under their golf club address and telephone number.

Anyone who does not wish to be included in the Directory in such a fashion should contact BIGGA HOUSE Tel: 01347 833900.

May 1999 Greenkeeper International
Career move for Chris Pye

Dow AgroSciences Specialty Products has appointed Chris Pye as Sales Manager for UK and Eire. He will be responsible for sales to key distributors of all the company's turf, ornamental, amenity and vegetation management products.

Chris has extensive experience in the amenity sports turf, crop protection and public health sectors. On leaving university, his first post was with the STRI at Bingley. He comes to Dow AgroSciences following five years in the public health sector with a major distributor.

A keen golfer in his spare time, Chris is a member of Woolley Park Golf Club, Barnsley. He is married with two children and lives near Wakefield.

John Thomas

John Thomas (46) of Lansdowne GC, Bath, had died following a short illness. He leaves a wife, Carol, and two sons as well as a son and daughter from a previous marriage.

Celtic Manor promotion for Jim

The Celtic Manor Resort near Newport, which is mounting a bid to stage golf's premier event in 2009, has appointed Jim McKenzie to the new post of Director of Golf and Courses Management.

The 36-year-old from Helensburgh moves up to the wide ranging position after being in charge of estate management and overseeing the development of three courses in six years.

The latest is the 7,450 yard, par-72 Wentwood Hills course, which will be officially opened on May 17 by the resort's touring professional, Ian Woosnam, and Ryder Cup Captain Mark James.

"I have no qualms as a Scotsman in saying that this is a world class venue," said Jim.

"Wentwood Hills has been specially designed for matchplay and to cater for large crowds. It's ideal for the Ryder Cup."

When Jim arrived at The Celtic Manor in 1993, from his previous position of Head Greenkeeper of Wentworth's West Course work had only just begun on the resort's first course.

"I recognised the Celtic Manor's potential even in the early days," he said.

"I knew it was going to be something special and felt I couldn't turn down the chance to be involved in creating three superb courses on one site. The only people who now ask me why I left Wentworth are those who haven't been here."

In his new role, Jim will continue to guide the work of The Celtic Manor's grounds maintenance team, while also heading a golf operation with an ambitious programme of events.

"We're very proud of what we've achieved here, and we want to take it further. The next stage is to host a European Tour event, the icing on the cake would be the Ryder Cup."

The Celtic Manor's Resort Director, Robert Church, believes Jim is ideal for his new role.

"His quiet and unassuming competence and his passion for golf have carried him immense respect throughout the industry. He has already accomplished great things over the last six years, crowned by the successful completion of Wentwood Hills. We're confident he can now carry forward that work on a wider basis and bring yet more success to The Celtic Manor."

The Celtic Manor's other two courses are: Roman Road (par-69, 7,001, opened 1995) and Coldra Woods (par-39, 4,000 yards, opened 1996).

The Celtic Manor's new hotel and conference centre is due to open this summer, giving the 1,400-acre resort 400 luxury rooms and an 1,800-seater conference venue.

Textron to supply PGA European Tour

Textron Turf Care and Specialty Products has signed a new agreement with the European Tour as official suppliers of turfcare equipment to the Tour.

The deal, which was completed recently at Wentworth, means that Textron equipment will be used at Tour venues when additional machines are required in the important two-week run-up to the competitions.

The Textron stable of machines includes the world famous names Ransomes, Jacobsen, Cushman, Ryan, E-Z-GO and Ikeki which have become renowned in the golfing world for quality, adaptability and reliability. The products used on the courses will cover the whole range from tractor gang mowers and the popular walk-behind motor mowers such as the Jacobsen Greens King whose name has become synonymous with top green care, through to aerators and Groom Masters.

"Textron is a top name in turf care with a range of products which is second to none. We are delighted to have them on-board again as an official supplier to the tour and we look forward to working closely with them all over Europe," said Richard Stillwell, of the Tour, who is responsible for ensuring the good condition of all courses.

Contact us

You can contact The British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association in any number of ways:

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Tel: 01347 833800
Fax: 01347 833801
E-mail: reception@bigga.co.uk
Internet: www.bigga.org.uk
Toro purchase Multi-Core

The Toro Company has completed its purchase of Multi-Core Aerators Limited, the British manufacturer of large turf aeration equipment. The three aerators in the Multi-Core range are now being sold and serviced in the UK by Toro Commercial Products’ distributor Lely UK and its national network of dealers and service centres.

Toro says the acquisition brings a high-quality product into its full range of turf maintenance machinery and greatly enhances its aeration range with equipment that has an immediate appeal to its own customers. “These are proven products with a high reputation and we are delighted to have them join our stable. They shall continue to be made in Britain, and with immediate effect all sales, spares, repairs and service are now through our Lely operation,” said Pete Mansfield, Toro General Manager at distributor Lely UK.

All three large units in the Multi-Core range are mounted to a compact tractor by way of a three-point linkage for fast, optimum core aeration. They are lightweight for use on sensitive turf areas such as fairways, tees and greens, as well as sports pitches, and come in working widths of 101, 152 and 203cm (40, 60 and 80in respectively).

Changes will be made during the summer to the aeration tine holders so that all tines supplied both by Toro and Multi-Core become interchangeable. Completing the Toro aeration range are its existing Fairway Aerator, which is a towed PTO-driven heavy-duty machine for high-quality aeration of large areas which can cover up to 1.5 acres an hour; the productive and durable walk-behind Greens Aerator covering up to 1,208sq m an hour; and the trailed or mounted Turf Aerator, which can be fitted with open or closed tines or slicing blades and operate at speeds up to 10mph.

New role for Richard at John Deere

John Deere Credit Limited has appointed Richard Kinsey as the company’s new Commercial & Consumer Equipment Finance Manager in the UK. Richard was previously with FAF, where he handled both grounds care and agricultural finance in Lancashire and Cheshire for two years, after a one year spell in direct sales.

His new role will be to liaise with dealers in developing John Deere Credit's business with golf clubs, local authorities and contractors, particularly in asset management and contract hire services, and coordinate the activities of the existing team of area managers and brokers. John Deere Credit has also announced a number of changes designed to further improve its service to customers.

An additional 36 new staff members have been trained and now provide extra support in essential areas of the business. These include the operations division, which is responsible for customer care and new business, and direct sales, which is responsible for customer and dealer enquiries.

Royal Inverdível GC...

They call that the 'Hanging Tree'.

It's where the members hang the greens chairman when they're unhappy with the course.

Joke

Royal Inverdível GC...

by Tony Husband

May 1999 Greenkeeper International 9
Wonderful Walton Heath!

The rain had stopped a few days earlier. The course was beginning to dry out. The sponsors were there in force and so were the Greenkeepers and their guests. Yes, everything was set fair for what had all the ingredients for a great day’s golf, and a great day it turned out to be too.

Each year we are inclined to take for granted that we are to be presented with a golf course in magnificent condition, whether we are just recovering from a freezing winter, a dry winter or, the case this year, an extremely wet one. This year was no exception, Clive Ogilby and his Staff once again produced a miracle on what was a few days earlier a very wet and soggy piece of heathland.

But it is not just because of Clive and his Staff that we have such a great day at Walton Heath. All the staff from the Secretary, Nick Lomas, and the girls in the office through to the Bar and Catering Staff seem to go out of their way to make sure that we have an enjoyable and our thanks are very much due to them for such a great effort. One of the traditions of the ‘Gentlemen’s Evening’ is that Alan Stow, Vitax, and Dennis Smith, Rigby Taylor, act as unpaid starters. This year was no exception and armed with waterproofs and warm clothing they set off for the 1st tee. The weather, however, was very kind and apart from an attempt at rain around 11am the day got warmer and warmer and Alan and Dennis removed more and more clothes.

It is also nice to see Chris Allen, late of Lewes GC, who was seriously ill a year or so ago, but thanks to a kidney donation from his son is now fit and well and gradually getting back to the 2 handicap that he played off before his kidney failure. Chris is now “doing the business” for Sheerwater Leisure, one of the day’s sponsors. The others to whom we are indebted were: Agricrop Amenity, CMW Ltd, Ernest Doe & Sons Ltd, E & S Sports Grounds, Farmura, Gem Professional, Grass Roots Trading Co, H. Pattisson & Sons Ltd, Rhone Poulenc, Rigby Taylor Ltd,Rolawn (Turf Growers) Ltd,The Scotts Co. (UK) Ltd, John Shaw (Machinery) Ltd., Sherriff Amenity Services Ltd, Sisis Ltd, and Vitax Ltd.


The Combined Score of Greenkeeper Playing with Club Official was won by Mervyn Downing and Fred Hague, of Aldenham GC, who both received a delightful Waterford Crystal Clock. All in all, a great day.

Derek Farrington

Master Greenkeeper gains promotion

John Quinn, a BIGGA Master Greenkeeper, has been promoted to Director of Golf Developments at Elmwood College and will manage all of the college’s sportsturf related construction and maintenance developments under the name of Elmwood Golf Developments.

John was previously the Course Manager at the recently opened 18 hole course in Cupar, and oversaw the construction and growing in of the course.

Among the future developments planned are a feasibility study into golf academy for aspiring young golfers and the provision of consultancy and contracting services for the sportsturf industry,” said John.

"Research facilities are envisaged in the future. The Elmwood name is synonymous with quality greenkeeper and Course Manager training and we now intend to offer our expertise to the wider sportsturf industry.”

Elmwood Golf Developments has been set up to manage and expand its golf related commercial activities and will provide services to all aspects of the golf industry.

With a contracting machinery fleet and fully trained greenkeeper staff they will offer services including hollow tining, turfing, seeding, top dressing, fertiliser application, pesticide application, verti-draining, spiking, scarifying and mowing.

Full sportsturf consultancy services will also be offered and include providing full advisory services in the following areas: annual maintenance plans, maintenance budget planning, machinery evaluation and selection, materials advice, design advice, project management, agronomic advice, management plans, construction specifications, materials specifications and conservation and ecological management.

Below: BIGGA Chairman, Gordon Child shows a touch of class as he tees off

Above: Alan Stow and Dennis Smith