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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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Dublin the venue for Sportsturf Ireland

"Sportsturf Ireland" staged by The Golf Course Superintendents Association of Ireland (GCIAI) will be the largest turf management and groundcare exhibition ever to be held in Ireland. This bi-annual Trade Show is being held at the RDS in Dublin on November 14 and 15 and due to the increased demand for space is for the first time being run over two major exhibition halls at this prestigious venue, the Main Hall and the new model Shellbourne Hall.

Sportsturf Ireland will act as an important shop window for all major machinery manufacturers, dealers, the supply industry and many ancillary exhibitors of interest to those involved in fine turf maintenance. It presents an ideal opportunity to discuss at first hand both the problems and the developments of the trade between the supplier and the end user.

In addition to those connected with the golf market it will interest a wide section of the fine turf industry including sports clubs, parks, local authorities, education, landscapers, contractors and leisure complexes. There should be something to interest everyone from secretary/managers, golf course superintendents to assistant greenkeepers and grounds people to students.

The GCIAI is a non-profit making organisation set up for the education and improvement of those involved in Irish golf greenkeeping. It has now expanded into sports clubs and landscaping and other areas of fine turf management covering the whole of Ireland. As this is a bi-annual event a large attendance is expected from every corner of the country over the two days.

Admission is free.

Wednesday 14 November, 10am - 6pm
Thursday 15 November 10am - 5pm

Hair today...

Master Greenkeeper Anthony Davies, Course Manager at Prestbury Golf Club near Manchester, will be hoping for a mild winter having had his head shaved in the name of a cancer charity.

"I decided that because October is Breast Cancer Awareness month I would have my golden locks shaved for charity and hopefully raise funds at the same time," explained Anthony.

No shrinking violet, Anthony opened the doors to his friends and supporters on the evening of the big snip.

"Over 50 people attended, either to gloat or to make sure I didn't do a runner!" joked the by now follically challenged Anthony.

On the night of the 'BIG CUT' £500 was raised and since that evening the amount has reached £1,100. All the proceeds are heading for an early detection Ultrasound scanner for the Breast Screening unit at the Macclesfield District General Hospital.

Anyone wishing to support Anthony's fund raising exploits can send a donation to BIGGA House, where we shall make sure any money is forwarded to Anthony.

Cumbria Cup goes to Graham Forbes

Graham Forbes, Head Greenkeeper of Maryport Golf Club, emerged as winner of the Course Care Cumbria Cup which was finally played at Penrith Golf Club having been postponed due to the Foot and Mouth epidemic earlier in the year.

Graham lifted the prestigious Whitelaw Bowl with a score of 37 Stableford points winning on a better back nine.

Graham is pictured with the Whitelaw Bowl between BIGGA Chairman Clive Osgood and Penrith Captain, Donald Birckett.
Textron Managing Director resigns

Harold Pinto (right), Managing Director of Textron Golf, Turf & Specialty Products - International, has resigned and left the company at the beginning of this month.

His decision is purely voluntary and he is returning to the USA to head of the Boston-based Goldman Industrial group reporting directly to their Chairman and CEO, Greg Goldman.

"We are all really sorry to see Harold go and wish him the very best in his new career opportunity. He has done a tremendous job in the past four years where he has successfully managed the integration of Jacobsen and Ransomes, bringing together the two organisations under the Textron umbrella and creating a distinct identity for the two major brands in their respective market sectors," said Peter Bell, Marketing Director.

He leaves behind a superb team of people in a stable and progressive business with high expectations of continued growth in their respective markets.

"We all echo the thoughts of Greg Hyland, the President of Textron Golf and Turf in the States who, in thanking Harold for his outstanding contribution said that he will miss his business insight, his leadership and his efforts to consistently move the business forward, while wishing him great success in his future endeavours."

Following his departure Textron announced a series of temporary organisational changes until the reorganisation of the International division is finalised. This will result in the senior management team at Ipswich reporting directly to Greg Hyland, the President of Textron Golf and Turf in the USA.

Scotland | North take Norrie Whytock Trophy

The Norrie Whytock Team Trophy sponsored by Aventis, was once again held at Auchterarder GC by kind permission of the Captain and Committee.

The Sections were all represented and the players were looking forward to taking part in what has become a regular fixture in the Region's golfing calendar. The weather was kind but prior to the day, the Course Manager, Archie Dunn, was not hopeful as the rain had made conditions pretty awful. Thankfully they cleared up on the day.

The event consists of teams of four from each Section within the Scottish Region taking part on a Stableford basis with the best three scores counting. Conditions were ideal and with the European Tour event taking place next door at Gleneagles the players were in good company. Some of the scores returned would not have disgraced that field.

At the end of the day the North Section again emerged as winners with an aggregate of 104 points. The winning team comprised of Iain MacLeod, Steve Sullivan, David Marnoch and Stuart Hogg. Runners-up were the West Section on a countback from the Ayrshire Section.

Mention should be made of young John Mair, Beith GC, of the Ayrshire Section who amassed 40 points but unfortunately missed out on the team prizes.

Our thanks to Archie Dunn and his staff at Auchterarder GC for preparing the course for our visit. Thanks are also due to the club for the use of the clubhouse.

Peter Boyd

Myerscough College Annual Turf Conference postponed

This year's Myerscough College Annual Turf Conference 'In Pursuit of Excellence' has been postponed due to the events that occurred in the United States of America on September 11th. The continuing unstable situation affects all overseas visitors adversely and was seen to be an unnecessary journey at this difficult time.

The Conference was due to be held at The Norbreck Castle Hotel in Blackpool on the 12th to 15th November 2001.

Myerscough College will endeavour to re-arrange the Annual Turf Conference in the spring of 2002. For further information, please contact Myerscough College on 01995 642222 or via email: turfconference@myerscough.ac.uk

BIGGA on the move at Scotsturf

In the October edition of Greenkeeper International, it was stated that the BIGGA stand at the Scotsturf Exhibition, 6-7 November, would be situated on the East Balcony. This is not the case and visitors to the exhibition will be welcome at the stand's new location of C28, where Cheryl and Susannah from BIGGA will be promoting the benefits of membership. BTME, The Golf Club Show and Greenkeeper International.
Key appointment for CWC

Complete Weed Control has appointed Richard Minton as Business Development Manager. Richard is a well known face to many greenkeepers up and down the country from his attendance at the Greenkeeper of the Year competition and National Tournaments when they were supported by his company. This new post involves provision of technical and practical support for the 40 plus national franchise network including advertising and promotional activities, development of new market areas and the formulation of training initiatives aimed at enhancing overall business performance.

Richard, who joins the company with a sound background of over 12 years in the industry and has professional credentials of BASIS, BAA part 3, FACTS and NPTC, is looking forward to the challenge this new role will offer. Formerly UK Sales Manager for Scots Turf and Amenity, Richard brings with him an impressive portfolio of business achievements.

Carnoustie renews Toro partnership

Carnoustie has renewed its three-year partnership with Toro in a deal which has seen Course Superintendent John Philp replacing his entire Toro fleet, apart from nine of his Greensmaster greensmowers. The machines with the right pedigree and product development.

Night time golf at Aldwark

Night time golf came to Aldwark Manor when an invited audience saw the chemically illuminated golf balls struck, with various plastic covered lights of a similar nature used to aid the golfers sight. Greenkeepers were reported as far from happy with two or more hours of golf during the summer and the problems of overplaying and compaction. Added to this was the problem of footpointing on delicate and perhaps frosted greens and, of course, divot replacement. Overall impression? A bit gimmicky and not for the serious golfer.

Conference set to be resounding success

Textron, principals of the inaugural Turf Care Conference to be held at the Gleneagles Hotel from November 18-20, has reported that the event is now fully booked and looks set to be a resounding success. Over 120 delegates will be attending the event, which is the brainchild of Jimmy Kidd, Golf Courses and Estates Director at the world-renowned resort complex. The format has been designed to appeal to, and address issues, facing both business entrepreneurs who wish to build a golf course as well as those already involved in the industry.

This three-day conference is the ideal forum for representatives from all areas of the course construction and maintenance sectors to meet and expend their knowledge and understanding of each other’s role. We are absolutely delighted that demand for places has outstripped supply and this bodes well for the future of the event,” said Jimmy.

Peter Bell, Marketing Director of Textron was equally delighted with the Conference’s impending success. “As principal sponsor we are equally thrilled with the response from delegates. Through the hard work of Jimmy and his staff, this inaugural conference looks set to become an annual event with delegates and speakers attending from all parts of the globe. This international perspective will ensure that all participants can exchange views and discuss issues that affect this burgeoning industry,” said Peter.

New title for Gordon

Following a decision by the Management Committee Gordon Moir, who oversees the management of all six St Andrews Links courses, has had his job title changed to Links Superintendent.

Previously Head Greenkeeper of the Eden Course, Gordon, a past Chairman of the Scottish Region and National Board of Management member, took up the post last October inheriting the all-encompassing title of Links Manager but it is hoped that the new title will highlight the focus of his responsibility which is the management and maintenance of the courses.

“We are confident that George will be an excellent addition to the management team at Scotsraig. He is very ambitious and dedicated to his work,” said Club Secretary Les Liddle.

He will inherit a new irrigation system which has recently been installed on the Final Open Qualifying Course.

Portugal venue for EGD annual meeting

The European Golf Distributors held their 8th Annual Meeting in Porto, Portugal during October, with members from eight different countries present. Principals of Amenity distributors from throughout Europe make up the group, whose objective is to share information, market trends and product development.

A wide range of topics were discussed, including the adverse weather conditions last winter and how it affected the amenity market throughout Europe and as a group how they can further the excellent technical service offered to the benefit of customers throughout Europe.

For further details contact Rod Feltham, Secretary, European Golf Distributors 01934 820868.

Scottsraig appoint George to new role

Scottsraig Golf Club has appointed George Paterson as its first Course Manager. George, who takes up the post in December having fulfilled his notice from his position of Course Manager of Sligo Golf Club in north-west Ireland, was previously Head Greenkeeper at Trostorp and Rosemarie GC in the north of Scotland.

“We are confident that George will be an excellent addition to the management team at Scotsraig. He is very ambitious and dedicated to his work,” said Club Secretary Leslie Liddell.

He will inherit a new irrigation system which has recently been installed on the Final Open Qualifying Course.

Scottsraig, on the other hand, is a one handicap golfer and is married to Annie with two young men, George, 6, and Gregor, 12.

Portugal venue for EGD annual meeting
Grade A Club benefits for Dartmouth G&CC

Membership of an innovative club is helping Dartmouth Golf and Country Club Course Manager Terry Farkins supplement his annual staff training budget. Soon its in-house training library will boast the full range of BIGGA greenkeeper training videos. Terry employs eight full time staff and one casual worker at the 27-hole golf and hotel complex situated at Blackawarton, near Tones in Devon. Investment in training has always been a priority for both Terry and his employer BBC Director General, Greg Dyke, who owns Dartmouth G&CC.

"We are constantly looking to move our greenkeepers up the NVQ qualification scale. At the moment, half our staff are qualified and the rest are keen to progress right up to NVQ level three. We run regular in-house training days and attend short courses where appropriate," said Terry. In fact, Terry is so committed to a continued career education that he plans to set up his own library within the course workshop area, and introduce a personal computer so that staff can regularly access the Internet for information.

"Ultimately, I'd like to undertake 90% of the training in-house and this means investing in educational materials. The British Seed Houses training credit scheme is an excellent idea has been well received by both the staff and the company. We've redeemed our first batch of points and will be using the money to build up a library of BIGGA training videos," he revealed.

As a member of the British Seed Houses Grade A Club, Terry has built up his points as a loyalty bonus based on the on-going seed business he has done with the company.

Top marks given to Thiefbeaters

Thiefbeaters has launched the Thatcham Permanent Security Marking and Database registration system. Designed to protect valuable vehicles and equipment, Thiefbeaters acts as a theft deterrent. The new system can be applied to a wide range of landscaping and amenity items, including mowers, chippers, tractors and hand tools.

It works by applying unique alphanumeric numbers, electronic tags and microdots to the structure and fabric of an item. This identification put in numerous overt and hidden locations, make it impossible for the thief to conceal, or remove the identity and legal ownership of the property.

Full details of the property and its unique markings are held on a national database which the police can access in the event of a theft. Further information can be obtained Tel: 0870 794 0111.

Latest brochure now available from Tonick

The new, full colour brochure from Tonick Watering features a comprehensive range of irrigation control products and accessories for golf course, sports grounds, garden centres and landscapes.

The range includes decoders with grammertesters, irrigation controllers, lightning protection modules, fieldwiring connection and fault-finding kits.

The text provides useful technical information for both greenkeepers and installers.

All of the products described are designed and made in the UK by Tonick. Watering and most items are available from stock.

The brochure is available free, on request, telephone: 01269 832325.

High floatation tyres from Nokia

New Nokia high floatation tyres - yes that's Nokia - are helping to reduce the round pressure of the Carraro TRX 8400 tractor, which is a 74hp machine weighing 2100 kg to 6 psi.

The Nokia tyres, which fit comfortably into the Carraro tractor’s frame, boast a lifespan which is typically equal to or greater than the vehicle to which they are fitted.

"Even when the TRX is working with one of the larger Verti-Drain deep aeration machines mounted on the back, it still creates less disturbance to the grass than an empty turf utility vehicle moving personnel around," said Dustin Floughton, Head Greenkeeper, at Seaford Head Golf Club, who purchased a Nokia shod machine recently.

Like other Carraro tractors, the driving position and controls are fully reversible. This means that attachments can be fitted at both front and rear, and the operator can switch from using one to the other almost instantly.

This saves time and boosts productivity, with various tasks being carried out quickly and efficiently, without damaging the turf.

Carraro tractors are distributed in the UK by Charterhouse Turf Machinery Ltd.

Estimated £60K damage caused by vandals

Five greens were decimated overnight in an act of mindless vandalism at Llanymynech Golf Club when weed-killer was thrown over them.

The greens will now need to be rebuilt and new turf laid at a cost of approximately £10,000 to £12,000 per green.

Course Manager Allen Lewis could not believe his eyes on the morning of September 18 when he was alerted by a member of his staff to a white powder on the greens. This is now thought to have been Sodium Chlorate.

In the following three weeks the greens changed to yellow then white and finally brown as the grass covered died off over 60% to 70% of each green.

Officials at the club can think of no reason why anyone should want to do such a mindless act. The golf course is situated on the top of Llanymynech Hill with three greens in England and 15 in Wales.

Andrew joins Advanta Seeds UK

Andrew Hodgkiss has joined the Advanta Seeds UK amenity sales team, to support the Advanta “MM” and “Designer” distributors, and their customers, in East Anglia and the South East.

Based in Ely, Cambridgeshire, Andrew has many years experience working in the grass seed business, selling to local authorities, major turf growers, architects and other landscape specifiers, as well as private sports and golf clubs.
As readers will know from reports in Greenkeeper International earlier this year, BIGGA commissioned specialist golf consultancy MW Associates in March to carry out a detailed market research study on behalf of the Association. Funding for the research was provided by the R&A, whose financial support is gratefully acknowledged. Many people also assisted with the study, either by completing questionnaires or by taking part in telephone interviews, and a good number expressed interest in hearing about the findings of the research - and how BIGGA planned to follow up the study. So, in the first part of this article, Mike Williamson, the Director of MW Associates responsible for the study, describes how the research was carried out and summarises its main findings and conclusions. BIGGA’s Board has discussed these findings, both with Mike Williamson and at its own meetings, and, in the second part of the article, BIGGA’s Executive Director Neil Thomas highlights the priorities the Board has identified for more detailed assessment and follow-up action.

Mike Williamson takes up the story...

The general aim of the study was to establish how BIGGA, and its current policies and activities, are regarded by its members and the major companies and organisations in the golf industry that it has dealings with. A further specific aim was to identify ways of tackling problems, and exploiting opportunities, in the areas of marketing and revenue generation.

A key element of our survey work was a detailed questionnaire sent to a sample of just over 2,000 BIGGA members, representing all membership categories and all regions of the country. 574 completed questionnaires were returned - a response rate of 28%.

In addition, we carried out about 130 telephone interviews, which covered:

- 32 potential BIGGA members, i.e. greenkeepers who have not joined BIGGA;
- 31 lapsed BIGGA members, i.e. greenkeepers who had previously been, but were no longer, BIGGA members;
- BIGGA Board Members, senior staff, and regional administrators;
- 32 commercial contacts, i.e. representatives of the Golden and Silver Key company members of BIGGA, companies advertising in Greenkeeper International, golf courses, golf course companies, and representatives of golf organisations, i.e. golf unions, the colleges, professional associations, GTC, STRI, etc.
- 23 representatives of golf clubs, i.e. representatives of Association of Golf Club Secretaries and individual golf clubs.

The completed questionnaires and telephone interviews yielded a great deal of information and opinion - some of a strategic nature and some at a very detailed level - and this is reflected in the structure of our report. We highlight a number of general, and common, themes that emerged from many of the questionnaires and interviews, but also list the many detailed comments and suggestions - often made by only one or two people, but well worth considering nonetheless - relating to specific BIGGA services or aspects of Greenkeeper International or BTME.

The 'big issues' that emerged from the research can be summarised as:

**The Way Forward?**

A feeling came across in many of the interviews - perhaps prompted by the very fact that the research was being carried out - that, having come a long way in its first 14 years, BIGGA had reached a point where important decisions had to be made about its future direction, and at a time when finances are tight in the golf industry generally.

**Membership - quality or quantity?**

On balance, the research supports the direction BIGGA is already taking, i.e. introducing a minimum qualification for full membership and focussing on education and training as the core membership service, with the aim of positioning BIGGA clearly as a professional association for greenkeepers at all levels and stages of their career. This could enable BIGGA to play a key role in co-ordinating the design and delivery of all levels of education and training, and strengthen the Association’s relationship with the commercial sector.

**Policy priorities**

Two BIGGA services clearly emerged from the research as the top priorities in terms of spending any extra money that becomes available, and being protected against any cuts if savings have to be made. These are education and training - locally delivered so far as possible - and working to improve the professional status, and the pay and conditions, of members.

**A centralised or devolved organisation?**

BIGGA now has a large and very dispersed membership, who are looking for membership services (as well as recruitment efforts and liaison with employers) to be as locally based as possible. Having smaller (and therefore more) regions each with its own administration and support help, while members need more information about 'who does what' in BIGGA HOUSE, and how all the work done there contributes to member benefits.

**Funding and the relationship with the commercial sector**

Much more of BIGGA’s funding now comes from BTME, with the PGA and Greenkeeper International than from members’ subscriptions. With financial pressures in the commercial sector, businesses looking for more commercial return on the money they spend with BIGGA, and some uneasy among members about potential over-dependence on commercial funding - but all combined with an expectation that BIGGA will continue to expand its services to members - there are clearly financial challenges to be faced. Efforts should therefore be redoubled to obtain more funding for greenkeeper training, in both from the people who ultimately benefit most from it - professional and amateur golfers.

**Working links and public relations**

The research suggests BIGGA should strengthen its working links with colleges and the GTC on education and training, and the Association of Golf Club Secretaries and the College of Golf and the Association of Golf Club Secretaries as the other two associations representing the professionals in golf management. The evidence also suggests BIGGA needs to devote more resources to professional PR to raise the profile of the Association and get its messages across more effectively to members, golfers, and companies and organisations in the golf industry.

**Greenkeeper International and BTME**

While these are both clear success stories, there was a strong body of opinion in favour of the magazine having more technical, research, educational, and business management content - and with more of this being related to ‘ordinary’ golf courses.

BTME is seen as providing excellent service to the industry and good commercial opportunities for companies. While Harrogate is generally accepted at present as the most appropriate location for the BTME, this needs to be regularly reassessed while there needs to be a focus on attracting members from further afield to Harrogate as well as ensuring that fresh faces and as many potential buyers as possible appear from year to year.

**A final word from Mike Williamson**

This brief summary has had to leave out most of what is in our 40-page report, but hopefully it will give a flavour of the breadth of the research. Again, my thanks on behalf of MW Associates to everyone who completed questionnaires or took time to speak to us.

Neil Thomas continues the story...

BIGGA’s Board of Management has given detailed consideration to the market research work and has identified the following as priority areas for more detailed assessment and follow-up action as a result of the market research.

- More effective communications and public relations, including the possible use of professional PR services to "get the Association’s message across" to its various target audiences, closer working relationships with other bodies where mutual interests could be clearly identified, and more use of techniques like the University of Reading study of employers at the County Golf Union level to promote membership recruitment and general support for BIGGA.

A review of BIGGA’s current three-tier structure, particularly with the aim of identifying cost-effective ways of strengthening the Association’s local “identity” and service delivery.

A review of the commercial funding generated by the Association, including a review of the concept of Golden and Silver Key company membership, in terms of features like the number of companies involved, the level of payment to BIGGA and the services offered in return.

Further strengthening of BIGGA’s key service of education and training, including the funding of this service and the role of the Association in relation to the colleges and the GTC.

For the Board’s next meeting in December I have a brief to make regarding the way in which the Association should proceed with the assessment and any follow-up action. There is no doubt that this will involve, as it should, members at all levels of the industry, but we need to look back at BIGGA’s operation over the last 14 years and then decide on how best to take the Association forward in the years that lie ahead.

The work involved will be significant and while there will be expectations, there also needs to be a degree of realism. There will be no quick fixes and we are certainly looking at a medium/long term process whereby we can envisage coming to decisions, and implementing them, over a period which may be in excess of two years. It also needs to be said at the outset that there will undoubtedly be resource implications to consider and this will be a major factor in determining the timing for implementation of recommendations once approved by the Board of Management.

This should, therefore, be an exciting period when, far from resting on its laurels, BIGGA will examine its progress and development since 1987 and look to move forward progressively for the benefit of its membership in this new century.
I have become extremely concerned about our profession of late there appears to be a kind of complacency which I do not wish to be a part of - an "acceptance of our lot" attitude which serves no-one least of all our industry. We have come too far in the last 15 years or so to now sit back and not gain strength and confidence from the advances made already in the acceptance of responsibility in managing golf courses.

So why am I so concerned? I believe there is a serious omission in the management of golf courses - see it in the average private members golf club, which make up approximately 90% of the golf played in this country.

There appears to be few who have the necessary confidence to stamp their authority and ensure that the right things are carried out on golf courses and therefore ensure the best conditions are available to players. At this point I do not want people to misinterpret me - I am not a power hungry autocrat! I just want wonderful golf courses - is that not what we all want?

My argument is that we can only achieve this if the course is managed efficiently and that is not achieved by reactive management, which we come across whenever I hear of problems on golf courses.

Proactive management demonstrated by properly empowered Course Managers is an absolute necessity if golf course management as a profession has any chance of survival or even taken seriously in the future. Alarimeter! I don't think so.

A conversation heard recently at a prominent college - "We are looking at management courses specifically targeted managers both inside and outside the golfing industry to train to ensure that golf courses in the future are managed properly.

And then the bit that hurts the most - "We are looking at attracting golf professionals and interested club officials, because greenkeepers do not appear to want to take on this demanding role."

I hope there are now greenkeepers who are fluming at the previously statud comments - if there are not then I see no hope for us in the future. I have lived through a time when so called experts tried to manage golf courses and had unbelievable catastrophic affects on golf course conditions.

I believe this will happen again but maybe this time they will use us as their technicians and make it work this time - unless of course we do something about it!

Duncan McGilvery, Course Manager at Potters Bar GC, has some concerns involving the profession. Do you share his views?

Phosphate Clarification

Since my recent article was published in Greenkeeper International it was June 2000 I am writing to explain the next issue of the magazine. The article entitled "Soil Analysis: Unravelling the Mystery" (September 2001) I have received a number of enquiries regarding the role of phosphates in soil. The article states that phosphates have a negative charge and thus cannot be held by soil clay organic matter and therefore ensure the best possible working environment.

Phosphates do indeed have a negative electrostatic charge, in fact, in sandy soil, with relatively little organic matter, certain forms of fertiliser phosphate eg phosphoric acid and ammonium phosphate are relatively soluble. Such products can be leached readily into the rootzone. They provide an ideal method of getting phosphate to bentgrass roots without building up the surface phosphate concentrations which would lead to a promotion of poa annua establishment.

BIGGA have heavily subsidised management courses to fill this gap in training only to find that when offered to our membership these opportunities are not taken up - or certainly not taken up to any extent that would make any appreciable difference.

The excuses given are not worth repeating - it would only infuriate my like minded colleagues.

For a time I was very confident in our future but I am not so sure now. I recently, by chance, met two colleagues from the past whom I believed to be two forceful young potential future proactive Course Managers - they have now sadly left the industry, and when pushed for a reason, had been let down by ineffective reactive management from above.

"Don't rock the boat" - "Take the salary and do as you're told" - "Blame the green committee when things go wrong" - etc. etc.

These may appear to be easy actions (or non-actions) but as every successful manager knows it is a very short-term view.

At the moment I have a very pessimistic view of our profession - am I wrong?

My intention through this article is to get some sort of reaction from our profession tell me and other concerned colleagues through Greenkeeper International whether I am right and what we should do about it.

Am I worrying unduly? - unfortunately I do not think so.

Please respond in your hundreds and show the "powers that be" within the golfing world that we are ready and willing to take on the responsibility necessary to ensure not only the efficient management of our golf courses but our own futures.

Duncan McGilvary, Course Manager Potters Bar Golf Club. 26.09.01

Address your letters to The Editor, Greenkeeper International, BIGGA HOUSE, Aldwark, Alne, York Y061 1UF, or email them to reception@bigga.co.uk

National Championship thanks

Having just returned from the National Championship at Royal Birkdale and Southport & Ainsdale, I would like to congratulate the organisations at HQ for a superb week. I played with various people over the two days and thoroughly enjoyed the company of these guys. Hopefully I can meet them sometime in the future and play their courses as they can come and play mine.

The courses, the championship dinner, the organisation, the friendship of all the competitors there was second to none. This was my first National Championship and it certainly won't be my last and that goes for all the competitors from Scotland, and all of our members from wherever they came from across the UK and Europe.

The friendliness of everyone there that week shows that there are no individuals in this Association. We are all equals and that is what BIGGA is all about. So once again thanks for a great week and keep up the good work.

PS. You can put my name down for next year as I will certainly be there. Thanks also to Craig Pernicucci and Gary Rodgers.

Chris Yeaman, Course Manager, West Linton GC

A thank you from Denmark

In the beginning of October, six of us from Denmark decided to go and visit my good friend Matt over in Bristol and play some golf. We would all like to thank Matt Hawker, Head Greenkeeper Bristol & Clifton GC, and Gary Hawley, Head Greenkeeper Filton GC, their Pro shop and their members for the warm welcome we all got.

For some of us it was the first time in England, and the weather was with us. Hope to see you all in Denmark next year.

Mick Steele, Head Greenkeeper Morse Golf Club, Denmark
This month, Ken Richardson, BIGGA's Education and Training Manager, gives details of the latest Health and Safety regulations which could impact on your daily working practices …

**Golf Course Health and Safety**

Changes to the Health and Safety at Work Act continue to have an impact on golf greenkeepers. The Government and the Health and Safety Commission have recently announced a series of targets that are designed to reduce work related deaths, accidents and illnesses in the biggest shake up of health and safety for 25 years.

The initiative comes soon after Home Office proposals to introduce a new offence of corporate killing.

The targets are:

- To reduce the number of working days lost from work related injury and ill health by 30% by the year 2010 (a decrease of 7.5 million working days).
- To reduce the incidence of people suffering from work related ill health by 20% by the year 2010 (80 000 fewer cases)
- To reduce the rate of fatal and major injury accidents by 10% by the year 2010
- To achieve half of each improvement by 2004

To achieve these targets, the Government has introduced a 10 point strategy supported by a 44 point action plan which will provide incentives and practical support to employers, together with a range of measures to tackle employers who do not meet their health and safety responsibilities.

The plan will include:

- Tough penalties to deter health and safety offenders, including imprisonment to be available for most health and safety crimes and the increased maximum fine available to the lower court (£200 000) to be extended to most health and safety offences.
- An increase in the range of innovative penalties such as fines linked to turnover and suspension of managers without pay.
- A directors Code of Practice that will make a named person responsible for health and safety matters within every company (golf Courses).
- New help for small businesses, including sector specific health and safety guidance. Exploring, with the Insurance Industry, incentives to reward good health and safety performers at the expense of the bad.

Copies of ‘Revitalising Health and Safety Strategy Statement’ are available from DETR Free Literature, PO Box 236, Wetherby; LS23 7NB (tel 0870 1262626).

Many greenkeepers suffer from the effects of hand arm vibration and managers needing help with understanding the risks can acquire a new electronic product to assist them.

The CD ROM The Successful management of Hand Arm Vibration uses video clips, sound and animation to illustrate how to identify and reduce the risks. The CD ROM can be obtained from HSE books www.hsebooks.co.uk (tel 01787 881153) priced at £95 +VAT.

A new standard test to validate training for fork lift truck operators has been developed by accrediting bodies and the Joint Industry Council for Lift Truck Operators. Advice on training of lift truck operators and details of accrediting bodies is contained in Rider Operated Trucks Operator Training is available from HSE books.

**Local Environment Risk Assessment for Pesticides**

The Local Environment Risk Assessment for Pesticides regulations (LERAP) state that where drift from pesticides which could affect water quality or be harmful to birds or aquatic life, you should limit the use of such pesticides near watercourses. A buffer zone of 6 metres must be kept between sprayed unless sprayer equipment is used which reduces the risk of drift. Equipment is given a 1, 2 or 3 Star rating depending on how much the buffer zone can be reduced with 3 Star equipment giving a reduction to 1 metre.

**British Standard EN907**

BS EN907 require that all new sprayers must be fitted with a chemical induction hopper. Where this is not possible, the height from the ground or platform to the filling hole should not be more than 1500 mm and the horizontal reach between the rim of the tank and the hole should not be more than 300 mm. In addition, BS EN907 require that all sprayers be fitted with a clean water tank of at least 15 litres capacity.

**Groundwater**

The latest regulations on groundwater state that sprayer operators are not allowed to flush spray washings down drains or onto waste ground. Unless a washing system is fitted, the tank must be fully filled and the washing disposed of either into purpose built tanks or by spraying over the previously sprayed area.

To reduce the time needed to carry out these operations, some manufacturers fit tank flushing packages, which mean that only 10% of tank capacity is needed for flushing.