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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE
The official monthly magazine of the British & International Golf Greenkeepers Association

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May 2004
Your next issue of Greenkeeper International will be with you by 9 June 2004

REGULARS

News
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Education
Ken Richardson confirms the name of the new BIGGA Golf Environment Competition sponsor and gives some information about Continue to Learn 2005; the Toro Student of the Year Competition and a new BIGGA Conference earmarked for next spring.

Membership
Continue to Learn: Soil Variability on Golf Courses: The Case for Better Information
Van Cline looks at what can be learned from increasing your knowledge of soil.

Letters

New Products

Around the Green

Features Listing
Helping you track down some of Greenkeeper International’s past articles.

As I see it ...
BIGGA National Chairman, Andy Campbell describes some of the work he has been doing over the last month on behalf of the Association.

FEATURES

A Safe Pair of Hands
New BIGGA Chief Executive, John Pemberton, explains to Scott MacCallum what he hopes to achieve in his new role.

Recycling Never a Waste of Time
Maggie Newton, explains how compost can provide an environmentally sustainable and cost effective solution.

Glorious Goodwood
Scott MacCallum meets Bill Payne, Course Manager at The Goodwood Club, who has many reasons to be cheerful.

UK Survey on Use of Biological Products
- Have Your Say!
Stella Rixon, of the STRI, is looking for your help to gather data on the use of biotech products.

10 Good Reasons to Enter
Lee Penrose urges golf clubs to enter the BIGGA Golf Environment Competition and explains what entrants will get from it.

Making the Most of Your H2O
Roland Taylor gives some sound advice on making the most of water features.

Seed or turf? If time allows, you’ll reap what you sow
Ellie Toit looks at when seeding is the right option.
AS CHANGEABLE AS THE WEATHER

Well, we can honestly say the season has well and truly started. Phil Mickelson has shaken off the tag of "Best Player Not To Have Won a Major" in outstanding fashion at Augusta. Ironically I missed the best Masters for several years as I was on holiday in Tenerife where none of it was shown live on television. With so many good Spanish players I found that a little strange, and not a little frustrating.

Back home, competition secretaries are sharpening their pencils, or to be more precise in this modern age, dusting down their software and you are receiving plaudits for the excellence of your winter programme construction work... well, it would be nice wouldn't it?

But what can we hope for in 2004? Well good weather would be nice. I know how much you suffered from the cold start to the season last year and I'm sure a plea for warm sunshine and a little nocturnal rain would not go amiss.

If you think about it so much rides on weather in the greenkeeping profession. A good dose of the aforementioned combination and you will have every chance to prepare your course to its best. Golfers have the sun on their backs and putting surfaces which give the best chance for the ball to drop. Result? Happy golfers, and happy golfers mean fewer moans and fewer moans mean fewer complaints flying in your direction. That allows you to get on with your job. If you're not pulled away to answer the complaints of a 23 handicap who thinks the only reason he three putted five times was the state of the green you can concentrate still further on the course condition.

Alternatively, if the weather goes against you, you will no doubt find that it is your political acumen rather than your agronomic know how that is of most use.

You would hope that more people would appreciate that the weather can't be controlled and a degree of understanding for the problems it brings wouldn't go amiss.

So can I shed any light on the upcoming weather? I've trawled the web to find out any long term forecasts and can reveal that May is going to be significantly warmer than average with rainfall below average. Having said that the third week will see rain forecasts and can reveal that May is going to be significantly warmer than average with rainfall below average. Having said that the third week will see rain...

NEW LOOK TO BIGGA'S SALES TEAM

The BIGGA sales team has taken on a new look with the arrival of Samantha Richardson, Sue McDonough and Amy Newport who, together with Sales Manager, Rosie Hancher, will be responsible for selling adverts and exhibition space in Greenkeeper International, the BIGGA Golf Directory, BTME and Clubhouse.

Advertising Sales Executive, Samantha, 28, joins the Association from Maxi Print in York where latterly she was selling advertising for the official magazine of English Cricket. Prior to that she worked for an IT company in York.

A qualified Beauty Therapist, Sam married Dominic in Las Vegas last year and they have just moved into a new home in Fulford, York, which they share with two dogs, three cats and two rabbits. In her spare time she is a keen artist, specialising in landscape.

Sue, 35, is Exhibition Sales Executive and is reunited with Rosie with whom she worked in Harrogate where, together, they launched a magazine for school leavers.

Samantha Richardson, Sue McDonough and Amy Newport

UPDAtED USGA GUIDElINES

Previously she worked for News International in London. As part of the team on the Times Educational Supplement (TES), she sold advertising on Nursery World Magazine and was involved with the launch of the Nursery World Exhibition held in Olympia and GMEX.

Now happily living in Harrogate Sue juggles her work and home life with her husband, Michael, and five and a half year old daughter, Hannah.

Amy, 25, is Sales and Marketing Assistant and arrives at BIGGA HOUSE from a post with an agricultural company based in Harrogate. She holds a BSc in Business Technology from Sheffield Hallam University, where she also spent two years in army training before deciding on life as a civilian. She is currently undertaking a marketing course at night school.

Amy once took four months to travel round America and during that time dropped into Gracelands to pay homage to one of her heroes, Elvis.

She lives in Harrogate and got to hear of BTME and ClubHouse through her fiance, Chris, who is an exhibition designer with his own company. Ncompass. They have a dog called Vegas.

The changes to the Sales team were brought about following the departure of Cheryl Broomhead and Katie Davies and the need to support the growing Exhibition sales of the Association.

The guidelines represent a time-tested, agronomically sound method of building putting greens. USGA greens are widely recognised for their agronomic excellence because of their history of success throughout the United States and many other countries.

Many of the greens constructed to the original recommendations, which were released in 1960, are still in use today. However, to address the increasing demands placed on modern putting greens, the USGA conducts updates which incorporate the latest research information from around the world, much of which is sponsored by the USGA Turfgrass and Environmental Research programme.

The guidelines are available through the USGA Turfgrass and Environmental Research programme at: http://www.usga.org/green/coned/greens/recommendations.html
MIKE LINCOLN-SMITH RETIRES

One of the best known and respected salesmen in the business, Mike Lincoln-Smith, of Hayter, has retired. Mike started as an apprentice agricultural engineer at Eastern Counties Farmers Aylesham almost 40 years ago, he then became a salesman, covering the Dissa area.

On the way to Hayters which he joined in '92 he worked for Vicon, Turners and Ransomes. Mike's thorough knowledge of engineering, both from a theoretical and practical perspective, has always meant that he has been heavily involved in product development as well as sales.

Mike has had many and varied interests outside of work. An accomplished sailor he is qualified to instruct in all aspects of the sport. He is a keen golfer although often other activities like motorcycling and building and driving kit cars would take precedence.

Where he has found the time for his other interests, DIY and photography, is anybody's guess. Running the marathon when he was 50 years old was another of his accomplishments.

Hayter have announced a number of changes to their sales team for commercial products. Joining the company is Simon Holmes who will be responsible for Scotland and the North of England. Simon, who is 26 and lives in Morpeth, comes to Hayter with a solid background in agricultural and horticultural sales.

Following Mike Lincoln-Smith retirement this has meant a realignment of the territories covered by Barry Halls and Sales Manager Robin Boyes. Stephen Clarke, who is currently a Territory Manager for Hayter consumer products, will also now take on responsibility for the commercial dealers in the South East.

NEW KIT FOR GLENEAGLES

The Gleneagles Hotel has taken delivery of a new tranche of course maintenance equipment from their local dealer, Scottish Grass Machinery. This latest round of machinery which includes Iseki TK546 compact tractors, two new E-Z-GO ST 4x4 and ST480 golf utility vehicles, Cushman Turf Trucksters and Ryan GA24 aerators, is part of a four-year tripartite agreement signed between Ransomes Jacobsen, Scottish Grass Machinery and Gleneagles.

"The golf courses here at Gleneagles are second to none and our members and our visitors from around the world, expect the very best playing surfaces. We are open all year round and therefore, the maintenance of the courses is very important to us. This new machinery is an invaluable aid to the daily preparation of the courses," said Scott Fenwick, Golf Courses Superintendent.

FRAUDULENT USE OF THE BIGGA CARD

It has come to our attention that fake BIGGA cards are being used to gain courtesy golf in the Manchester area. The cards being used are the old style plastic wallet cards which are notoriously easy to fake. We have changed the membership card to a white plastic credit card due to these problems and the plastic wallet cards have therefore not been in circulation since 2001.

If you are presented with one of these cards please confiscate the card from the individual and send it in to BIGGA House. The people involved in this scam risk affecting the courtesy golf scheme for genuine members of BIGGA.

"NEW" CHALLENGE FOR DAVID

A Head Greenkeeper for the 109-year-old championship New Course at St Andrews Links has been appointed following Euan Grant's move to the Old Course.

David Coull, previously Course Manager at Glen Golf Club, in North Berwick, took up the position at the Links last month. David, 37, has been at the Glen Golf Club since 2000 and has made a number of improvements including lengthening the course, building new tees and greens and revising bunkering. In 2002 he was one of three additional greenkeepers to work at Muirfield for the week of The Open Championship.

Prior to working at the Glen Golf Club, he was Head Greenkeeper at Oldham Golf Club and Greenkeeper at Luffness Golf Club.

"David impressed us with his commitment, enthusiasm and experience," said Gordon Moir, Links Superintendent at the Links Trust.

"I am very much looking forward to working with him and am confident he will make a significant contribution to the Links."
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But don't just take our word for it - call Allen today and arrange a V-Star Linear Aerator demonstration.
NEW MAN FOR WIEDENMANN

Wiedenmann, the Glasgow based distributor of specialist aeration equipment has appointed Bruce Alexander as Area Sales Manager for their Central sales area.
He has recently returned from the UAE where he has been serving as Sales Manager for Omtag, the Ransomes Jacobsen and John Deere distributors for the Middle East.

Bruce will be responsible for Central and Northern England as well as Wales, adding to the excellent support already enjoyed by Wiedenmann customers throughout the UK.

GENTLEMEN’S WHITEOUT!

The day of the Gentlemen’s Evening at Walton Heath dawned. Grey but dry in Worthing (where I live). That’s good I thought, no sign of the snow that had been forecast.
With 108 teeing-off, 130 sitting down to dinner, an obligation to pay a fee to the comedian booked as after dinner speaker and the last Gentleman’s Evening that I shall be organising the last thing I wanted to see was snow!

The first phone call came at around 6.30 am. It was Tony Dyke, of Wyke Green GC. “What’s happening?” he asked. Gradually the full horror hit me. North of Worthing there had been snow. It was confirmed by Mick Haynes, Deputy at Walton Heath, at around 6.50 am. “One and a half inches,” he said. I left home at 7.30 am and apart from a light dusting in the Horsham area there were very few snow flakes to be seen. I took the back lanes to Walton Heath, still no snow and I was only two or three miles away. As I climbed the hill the odd patches of white appeared to get larger the higher I got until I was driving alongside the practice ground. Totally, totally white!

But the staff at Walton Heath were tremendous. The Secretary, Mike Bawden, was on to the Met. Office for a local prediction while Caroline Edwards and her staff were answering non-stop telephone calls about whether the event was on or not.

As a watery sun appeared, all eyes and ears were on Clive Osgood (this last Gentlemen’s Evening as Course Manager as well) who had done a quick tour of the course. “You can start at 12.15 and you will all get 12 holes in.” were his most welcome words.

The only problem was where to put Johnny Beck and the Sherriff Amenity Services chuck wagon. In the end it was decided that the safest place was on the 1st tee so that all players could start with breakfast, as usual, beautifully cooked by Johnny, ably assisted by James Watson, Headland Amenity.

This also meant that Starters Dennis Smith, now retired from Rigby Taylor, and Joe Crawley, Vitax, would, of course, be picking it out all day!

Of the 108 originally playing we did, of course, lose some, especially those with long journeys and no promise of play, but in the end 92 teed off. Of the 108 teeing-off, 130 sitting down to dinner, an obligation to pay a fee to the comedian booked as after dinner speaker and the last Gentleman’s Evening that I shall be organising the last thing I wanted to see was snow!

The golf had taken place, a superb meal had been enjoyed, speeches were done, the raffle had been drawn and Kevin Devane (ably assisted by John Jennings, of Dukes Meadows GC) had entertained us well.

The winners of the various categories were:-

0-9 Handicap 1. (and the Shullockie Putter) David Murdoch, Lithook GC; 2. David Badham, Stockley Park GC; 3. Mike Gould, Copthorne GC.


All of those prizewinners received their prizes from the Captain of Walton Heath Golf Club, Tim Taylor. Tim had a lovely story to tell after the dinner when he replied to the toast of ‘Walton Heath Golf Club’.

His daughter, aged 15, had acted as a scoreboard carrier on the first day of The Open Championship at Royal St Georges. She was very nervous, having been allocated the very prestigious game, and the wind was very strong making it difficult to carry the board. She managed with the help of the Open Support Team member who had been allocated the game. Tim was full of praise for this unknown (to him) greenkeeper who had been such a gentleman to his daughter.

With the help of Peter Boyd, Scotland’s Regional Administrator, I discovered that it was Richard Saunders, St. Neots GC, and I was able to offer him the Barry Pace, of BSP Landscapes Ltd, sponsored place at the event for a “Deserving Greenkeeper”.

Richard duly attended the event and was surprised to receive a mention (not to mention the bottle!) as well as sincere thanks from this year’s Captain of Walton Heath Golf Club.

As usual Regional Chairman, George Barr, got the last word. I wondered what was afoot when he told all assembled that although it was well known that I was a lousy golfer, my real game had been cricket.

With this in mind he had acquired a cricket bat autographed by the South African Touring Team of 2003 and asked me to accept it as a memento of my last Gentleman’s Evening. Once again, thanks guys.

All that is left is for me to thank our sponsors who make the day what it is and to remind you that they were:- Amenity Technology; Avoncrop Amenity Products Ltd; BSP Landscapes Ltd; CMW Ltd; Complete Weed Control Ltd; Ernest Doe And Sons Ltd; GEM Professional Ltd; Golf Innovations Ltd; Grass Roots Trading Co Ltd; Headland Amenity; Rolawn (Turf Growers) Ltd; Symbio; The Scotts Co (UK) Ltd; John Shaw (Machinery) Ltd; Sherriff Amenity Services Ltd; Slisis Equipment Ltd; Tacit Golf Equipment Ltd; Vitax Ltd; WOLF-Garten.

Derek Farrington, South East Regional Administrator
A Safe Pair of Hands

To anyone who has had any serious involvement with BIGGA over the past decade the Association’s new Chief Executive will need no introduction whatsoever.

John Pemberton has been a senior figure within the Association for the past 11 years and was Acting Executive Director during the period of Neil Thomas’ illness, so when the Board of Management came to discuss a successor and the future of the Association, John’s name, and his installation as Chief Executive on a permanent basis, was high on the list of options.

In discussing his new appointment and what it means John was typically honest and open in his assessment.

“Now that I’ve had a few weeks to settle in and think about it, it’s quite scary really. Although it is nice to fulfil an ambition,” he smiled.

“BIGGA has grown from being a small organisation into a significant body within the world of golf and people’s expectations are much higher now than they have ever been,” said John, as he settled into his new office just along the corridor from his old one.

“Neil, who unfortunately we lost earlier this year, had made a major contribution towards the success of the Association and put down some very solid foundations and, in many ways, it is because of this that expectations have been increased.”

Having said all that, John brings with him a wealth of experience, not just that acquired with the Association.

“I have been in a position of having run companies in the past so taking serious responsibility isn’t something that is new to me. But I would be lying if I said I wasn’t a little apprehensive about it all,” he said.

John joined BIGGA 11 years ago as the Association’s Accountant but soon found his role expanding.

“Basically my role developed to meet the requirements of a growing Association and I’ve always been one for being fully employed and so as I saw opportunities to help the Association develop I became more involved.

“It’s a very interesting business and until you are at the sharp end you don’t really appreciate just how diverse its activities are.”

Shortly after John’s arrival David Golding left to lead the GTC and with one of David’s jobs being to organise the BIGGA Open Championship Support Team, John took that on board.

“While a very onerous task it was extremely rewarding to be involved in such a prestigious event and to have the opportunity to see The Open at close quarters.”

BTME was another event where John’s skills were put to good use and he took the opportunity to learn what it was all about before he joined the Association officially.

“I was due to start in March, but would have had to wait 10 months to the next one, so I came along in January to see what it was all about. At that stage it filled about one and a half halls, but with the number of staff we had employed at the time it was still a big event to run.

“I can remember we used to produce all the visitor badges in-house, insert them into plastic clips and then file them all alphabetically in cardboard trays. Heaven help anyone who dropped a tray!”

As the Association grew and Neil recognised John’s abilities his role developed to the extent that Neil was delegating more and more to him and involving him more in the decision making of the Association.

“Neil and I respected each other and my background made me the most natural person to support him which is why, seven years ago, we recruited Tony Cocker to take some of the accounts pressure off me.”

Another of the major projects in which John played a key role was the move to BIGGA HOUSE.

“Really it was a team effort but we had to find somewhere where we could build offices. We looked at quite a few alternative sites, none of which were really suitable, but after a battle with the local planners we received approval to build at Aldwark.

“Then it was a case of negotiating contracts with builders and architects and making sure we had the furniture to kit it out. The physical move was accomplished with the help of Aldwark Manor Course Manager Richard Gamble and his team, complete with tractor and trailer!”

John is a native of York, educated at the local grammar school before becoming an Articled Clerk with a local firm of Chartered Accountants.

“In those days articled clerks weren’t paid a lot of money and the prospect of higher earnings in the industry lured me away.”
“Over the years I have held a variety of posts, mainly involving the financial aspect of running businesses, among them a substantial period for a local firm of merchants in the leather and wool industry.

“I worked for them for 17 years before they were taken over by a large national company and then a further 18 months before deciding it was time for a change.

“It involved quite a bit of time away from home as I was in charge of two companies with depots throughout the UK. It required a lot of travelling and I never seemed to be home.

“My wife put a picture of me on the wall to remind the children who I was! “While the rewards were good and, if I’m honest, there was a lot of job satisfaction, it was just too demanding on the family and I looked for a change,” said John.

He is married to Judith with three children Michael, Cathryn and Carolyn, with his first granddaughter, Sylvia, arriving last October.

Prior to joining BIGGA he was the Company Accountant for a Northern based company which sold fittings into the double glazing industry.

Whilst there he introduced a fully computerised accounting and stock taking system as well as taking an active role in the overall running of the business. Attracted by an advert in a local paper and the prospect of a new challenge, he decided to explore the vacancy at BIGGA. The rest, as they say, is history.

He had minimal knowledge of golf at the time, but his desire to throw himself into anything he is involved in has seen him pick up the ethos and politics of the game remarkably quickly.

Out on the course, it would be fair to say that his handicap has not quite kept pace with his growing talent, to the extent that he can often be seen sporting a mask!

John has now become the longest serving member of BIGGA’s staff and has used his financial acumen to steer the Association through some difficult times.

He has also seen the Association develop to the extent that, thanks to the generous grant given by the R&A, BIGGA HOUSE is fully paid for and the Association can move forward on a financially sound base.

Ever the canny Yorkshire accountant, John is quick to admit that there is sometimes a very thin line between profit and loss at the end of the financial year, but he is, as always, positive about the future of the Association.

“BTME & ClubHouse is developing further and Greenkeeper International, always a profitable publication, is turning the corner quicker than most following the advertising recession.

“BIGGA is now well established. We have an excellent team in place and I’d like to see the Association take the next leap forward,” he revealed, speaking with the zeal of a man who now tackles his golf with the same determination as he previously brought to his rowing and squash.

“Part of what I want to achieve is to develop much stronger ties with the other bodies in golf. We do have excellent relationships but these can be further developed, which would be to everyone’s benefit, not just BIGGAs.

“We are the second largest organisation of its type in the world and, as such, are a very reputable and prestigious organisation. We have to use that position for the benefit of the members and greenkeeping in general.

“Our prime role in life is education and that isn’t just the education of greenkeepers but also of golfers, and to an extent non golfers as well.

“Golf still receives a bad press at times and we can help change perceptions through the promotion of activities such as the BIGGA Golf Environment Competition.”

John’s open, friendly, demeanour will also be reflected in his management approach.

“I’d like to see a more open form of management and, looking internally, I certainly intend to involve all members of staff in the decision making and development of the business.

“While we are an Association run for the benefit of its members, it must also be recognised that we are a business, run very much in a commercial way.

“One of the things we must get to grips with is the updating of our five year plan, which was originally developed some time ago, but which has started to gather dust. We need to keep it regularly reviewed and use it as a working document.”

Externally he also intends to travel the country and meet as many BIGGA members, and prospective members, as is possible.

“The perception among some members is that we’re building an empire here at BIGGA HOUSE and that we are removed from the reality of what goes on at Section level.

“We’ve already decided that the Management team will spend more time out of the office visiting Section events and hopefully from the feedback we get from those meetings, coupled with the contact of the Regional Administrators, we can work towards bolstering support within the Sections.

“Some Sections are struggling for committee members and it is perfectly understandable as jobs, particularly those of the Course Manager are becoming far more demanding.

“They’ve also got to cater for family life and this doesn’t always allow time for committee work. We’d like to give them the support from here at BIGGA HOUSE and through the Regional Administrator so members can get real benefit and enjoyment out of being involved with BIGGA rather than it being seen as a burden.”

As you can see BIGGA’s new Chief Executive is a safe pair of hands and, if you have not already done so, given his desire to meet as many members as he can, you might have a chance to shake one of them in the not too distant future.
2004 will see the BIGGA National Championship contested over both days at The Alwoodley Golf Club, Leeds, which is officially recognised as one of Britain’s finest inland courses. The Golf Club, which was the first course to be designed by the famous golf architect Dr Alister Mackenzie, regularly hosts county and national events and ranks as one of the top 50 Championship courses in the UK & Ireland. The course layout forms part of Wigton Moor and is of a natural moorland character. In addition to its scenic beauty, the course offers a challenge to all golfers, with only the 10th and 11th greens altered from their original designs. The Championship Dinner will be hosted in the impressive Alwoodley clubhouse on the Monday evening.

The Championship over 36 holes of stroke play will produce the BIGGA National Champion, based on the low handicap score, who will win the prestigious BIGGA Challenge Trophy. The low gross winner will be presented with the BIGGA Challenge Cup. The TIGGA Regional Team Cup and prize will be calculated from the 8 best nett scores on the first 18 holes of the competition. There will be prizes for 1st, 2nd, 3rd over 36 holes in both the nett and gross categories. Each day, over 18 holes, prizes for the winners will be awarded in three handicap categories.

ENTRY
Members may enter the competition on a first come, first served basis as per the package below:-

Cost £85 (including VAT of £12.66)
to include all golf, lunches, dinner on Monday and prizes

COST £72.34 VAT £12.66

Name

Address


Postcode

Telephone

E-mail

Membership No

Handicap

BIGGA Section

Golf Club

COMPLETED ENTRY FORMS, TOGETHER WITH A CHEQUE
MADE PAYABLE TO BIGGA FOR THE FULL AMOUNT SHOULD
BE RETURNED TO:

BIGGA National Championship,
BIGGA HOUSE, Aldwarl, Alne, York Y061 1UF

PLEASE NOTE: The deadline for entries into the Championship
is 10 September 2004. Any entries cancelled after this date
will be ineligible for a refund.

FOR INFORMATION ON HOW TO GET TO ALWOODLEY GOLF
CLUB CALL SARAH NORRIS ON 01347 833800
OR VISIT www.bigga.org.uk

The British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association VAT REG NO 500 2920 05

SUGGESTED LOCAL HOTELS INCLUDE:

- Weetwood Hall Hotel
- Ramada Jarvis Leeds
- Thorpe Park Hotel Leeds
- Village Hotel & Leisure Club
- Travelodge
- Travel Inn

www.weetwood.co.uk
www.ramadajarvis.co.uk
www.shirehotels.co.uk
www.villagehotelsonline.co.uk
www.travelodge.co.uk
www.travelinn.co.uk

0113 230 6000
0113 267 2551
01927 583881
0113 264 1000
0113 278 1000
08700 850 950
0870 242 6000