



BIGGA UPDATE

WRITING these notes on the day following a pulsating climax to the Open Championship at Lytham, the immediate reflection is one of pride in the advancement made by the Association during the week of the Championship through the performance and attitude of those members undertaking duties at the course.

Given the prevailing elements, much assistance was given to Jimmy McDonald, the course manager, in addition to carrying out the official duties of bunker raking. Members

were at the course from 5.30 am on the last two days and a tremendous comradery prevailed as all pitched in to ensure a playable course following the torrential downpour on the Saturday.

Jimmy McDonald presented the course in magnificent condition and it was a fair test in all aspects for the world's best golfers. As a BIGGA member, Jimmy did the Association proud and there was a total commitment by the members present in helping him in all possible ways. At the presentation ceremony, Jimmy's achievements were given full recognition and one felt that the Association is moving forward as one of our members stood there proudly wearing his BIGGA blazer.

Throughout the week, many favourable comments were received on the way in which the greenkeepers presented themselves. All members were given BIGGA shirts and wet suits to wear, whilst the new lightweight jacket really stood out and projected the

Association, as did the new blazer and badge. Our site offices and marquee were superbly located by the R & A, adjacent to the first tee and eighteenth green, and the marquee was well set up and equally well used.

During the first round, our President, Viscount Whitelaw, and his wife visited us in the marquee and this generated considerable interest. Viscount Whitelaw spent over an hour with us. He has a tremendous knowledge of the game and his reminiscences were enjoyed by all. We are privileged to have him as our president and we look forward to his participation in our future activities.

With a view to the future, we certainly learnt from the week's experiences and will improve where necessary for next year at Troon. In terms of public relations, BIGGA is now known to many more people and the support promised from different sectors within the

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the Golf Course

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Front cover: The Open Champion expresses his thanks to BIGGA members at Lytham.



Left:
Walter Woods,
Neil Thomas
and
Viscount Whitelaw

Bottom left:
David Golding,
Trevor Foster and
Dennis Mortram
from Reaseheath.

Bottom right:
Chairman Jack
McMillan
discusses
problems with
Lytham's Jimmy
MacDonald.



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game holds out much for the future. In publicising ourselves, we still have work to do - how disappointing to hear the continual reference by the BBC television commentators to the 'marshals and stewards' undertaking the bunker-raking duties - and I can confirm that this was after a full briefing to the BBC on BIGGA prior to the start of the Championship through the R & A! On the positive side, how gratifying to read Donald Steel's comments in the Sunday Telegraph on our efforts to promote greater greenkeeper education and the need to upgrade the status of the greenkeeper to the level which exists in America.

Mention must be made of the work undertaken on the administrative side during the week and here special thanks are due to Ivor Scoones, Bert Cross, John Lowery and Arnold Phips-Jones. Cecil George and

Jimmy Neilson did an excellent job in ensuring bunker-rakers were on time for their matches and they established a welcome 'watering' hole in the woods half way down the first fairway! Thanks to all greenkeepers for a job well done. Last, but certainly not least, the Association is indebted to the tremendous job done by David Golding and his wife Noreen throughout the week and in the build-up to it. They were still smiling at the end of the week and met all situations with tolerance and humour. A job well done indeed.

On the final evening, I had a chance to discuss our contribution with both Michael Bonallack and David Hill, the championship secretary. Both are delighted with our developing presence at the event and with the overall performance. Another to offer congratulations was Alasdair Low, chairman of the championship committee. One

feels our cause had been much advanced and the commitment within the R & A to upgrading the greenkeeper's status is indeed encouraging.

My last memory is of our members gathered together at the edge of the eighteenth green to watch the final drama and Seve's triumph. What excitement when the great man came across to shake our hands and to express his thanks for the help given during the four rounds. Suddenly the cameras of the world's photographers started clicking and many a greenkeeper is now awaiting patiently the BIGGA group photograph, Seve in the middle with the cup held aloft! A great moment and a totally suitable climax to a tremendous week. And, so to Troon next year - somehow I don't think there will be any shortage of bunker-rakers.

Neil Thomas
Executive Director

I WOULD like to express my sincere appreciation to all those who helped make our contribution to the 1988 Open Championship at Lytham so successful, it was a privilege to meet and work with you all.

The task of the North West organising committee was made that much easier by the sixty or so people who turned up to rake bunkers and help with general duties. Not only had they travelled from all over the country but the ranks were reinforced by friends from New Zealand, Australia, France and Sweden - a truly international effort.

The comments we received from the R & A officials and players alike were really superb and left our extremely hard working executive director Mr Neil Thomas in no doubt we were behind him all the way with our professionalism.

While I feel it may be wrong to single out personalities from that was a team effort, my grateful thanks must be expressed to David Golding, the Northern Area Administrator, who worked so hard to co-

ordinate the whole operation months before and during the event. The sleepless nights spent by course manager Jimmy McDonald in preparation for the Open paid dividends - the course was a fit for champions and reinforced everyone's opinion of his outstanding ability.

I have left the memory of the Saturday deluge until last. I could not help feeling proud of the efforts put in by everybody available, the sight of the national and past national chairman and the executive director in waterproof suits moving water off the greens and approaches epitomised everything our Association and profession stands for - dedication and team work.

Again my sincere thanks to all who took part.

John D Lowery
Chairman of the
North West Section