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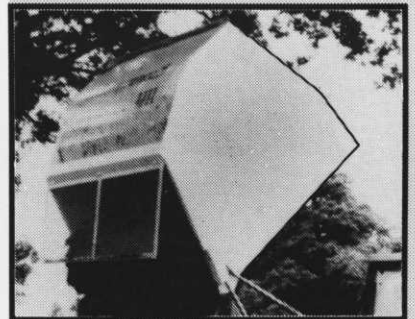
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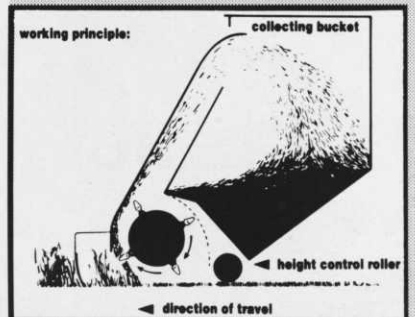
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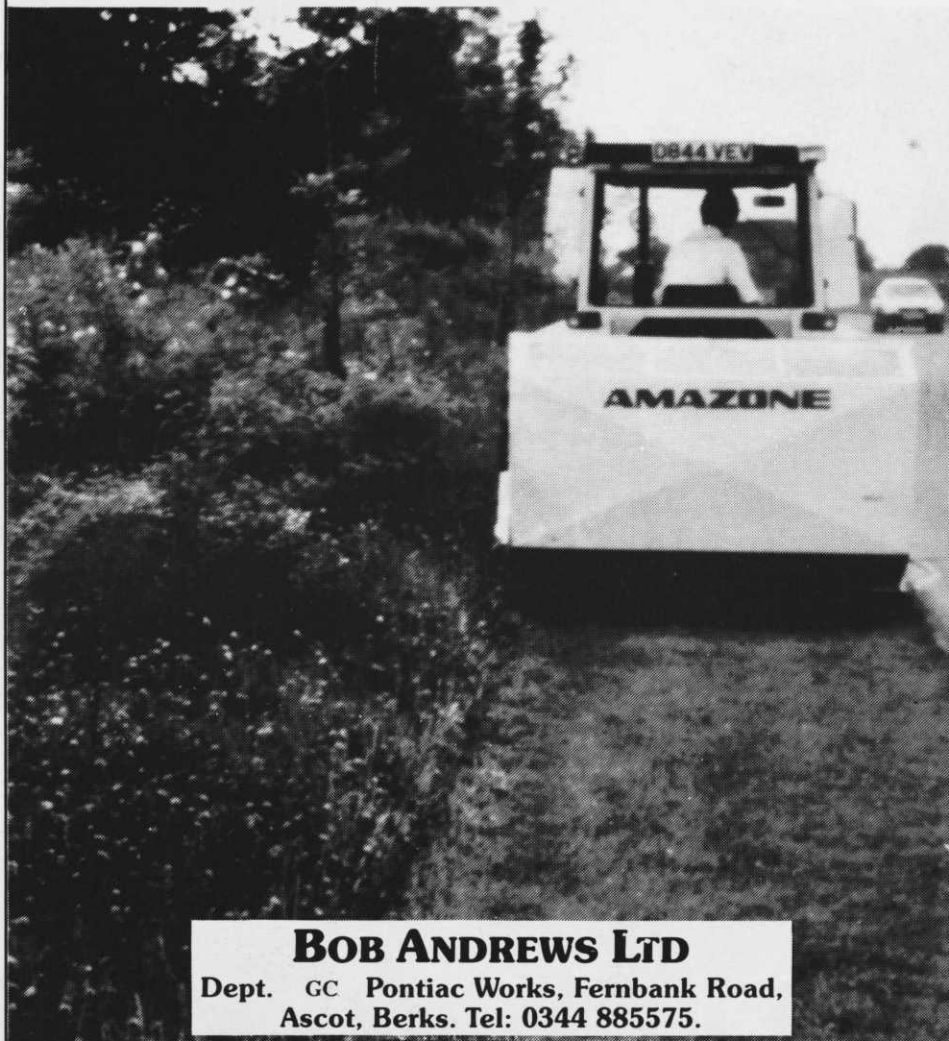


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BIGGA
UPDATE

It is a great pleasure to begin this month's UPDATE by informing members that your Board of Management recently invited the Rt. Hon. Viscount Whitelaw CH. MC to accept the Presidency of the Association. He has responded by stating that he would be very honoured to accept the invitation. As a pre-eminent politician and with his deep involvement within the game of golf, being a former Captain of the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews and a

leading amateur in his younger days, we are indeed privileged to have Viscount Whitelaw as our President.

**National
Tournament / International
Conference**

As an insert to this edition of the magazine, you will find full details for the week in Ayrshire, 26th - 30th September. Following my recent meeting with the Scottish Region sub-committee organising the event, the finalising of arrangements is now well in hand.

Members are advised to register with Chris Kennedy as soon as possible as naturally it will be a case of first come first served, particularly in respect of accommodation, tournament entries and starting times.

Uniform

I am pleased to announce that all items of uniform are now in production. Members are advised that current prices are

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Umbrellas

BIGGA umbrellas are now available. They are in red, white and blue and incorporate two prints of the Association logo. The umbrellas priced at £8.96 inclusive of VAT. Again all orders please to your Section Secretary.

Section Secretaries

Please note that Mr RJ Goodwin, Ashridge Golf Club, Berkhamsted, Herts HP4 1LU is the new Mid-Anglia Secretary - telephone Little Gaddesden (044284) 2434. Also, members should note

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**the Golf
Course**

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**Front Cover: Viscount Whitelaw, President
 British and International Golf Greenkeepers
 Association.**

CONTENTS

AN OPEN LETTER from Jim Arthur	8
SUCCESSFUL SEMINARS - Michael Coffey reports from the regions	10
WILL LOCAL AUTHORITIES BE PRIVATISED Anthony Davis expresses concern	14
THE STATE OF THE PROFESSION - Jack McMillan, Head Greenkeeper, at Sunningdale, and BIGGA Chairman defends greenkeepers	16
BLUEPRINT FOR A NEW COURSE - how the new South Course at Wentworth came into being	18
MORE BOOKS FOR GREENKEEPERS - by Eddie Park	23
BIGGA WAGES SALE	26
RESEARCH UPDATE - Neil Baldwin of the STRI on take all patch	28
NOTEBOOK - Keep up with people places and products	32
APPOINTMENTS	13,41,44,46
BUYERS GUIDE - this years new trade directory	47

that Mr R Willars, Secretary, East Midlands, Section advises that his correct tel: number is (0455) 283053.

GCSAA Conference and Show 1989

The next GCSAA Conference and Show will be held in Anaheim, California 1st-8th February 1989. Each year a number of BIGGA members make the trip and it occurs to me that, with the establishing of the new Association, consideration should now be given to members attending as part of an official BIGGA party rather than through the present adhoc arrangements. To this end, it should be possible to negotiate a favourable package through a travel agent. before proceeding however, I would be grateful if interested members could advise me in the next week or two in order that I can have an idea of possible numbers.

Seminars

It is encouraging that the recent round of seminars have been so successful. Although I was not able to be present, I understand that the South West Region seminar on 9th March was well attended and proved an informative day. Full marks to the South West Region - they have already held two regional seminars and given an early impetus to the new Regional structure.

On 15th March, I chaired the first Scottish Region Seminar under BIGGA auspices at the Countryside Commission Headquarters in Battleby, Perthshire and again this was a well-attended day enjoyed by all. The facilities were superb. For myself, these events represent an ideal opportunity to meet members and I learn much from the subject areas covered.

Moving down from Scotland to Cheshire. I was one of the speakers at the by now well-established North West Section annual seminar at Mere

on 17th March. Those present enjoyed well presented papers from speakers covering a number of diversified subjects.

Legal advice service

These brief notes will, I hope, clarify a few matters for members. It should be noted that the Legal Advice Scheme is NOT confined to advice in connection with employment problems. It is available to cover any legal problem a member may experience in either his working or private life.

Again, it should be noted that a major advantage of the scheme is that its benefits are automatically extended to each individual eligible member's immediate family - this being defined as the member's spouse and any children or relatives permanently residing with the member.

It is already clear that a number of members have benefited from the services available, particularly in employment situations. One Scottish member, recently made redundant, could not obtain any reason for the redundancy from his Golf Club. He has been involved in Greenkeeping for 23 years and feared that without reasons being given for the redundancy, he would experience difficulty in obtaining new employment. The Legal Protection Group intervened on his behalf and the reasons for the redundancy have now been given in writing. The reasons were valid and in no way reflected any incompetence or fault on the part of the member. The case has a happy ending as consequently the member writes to say that he has obtained a good job at another Club with which he is very happy.

It will be helpful in monitoring this Service if other members using it could write to me with their own experiences.

Neil Thomas
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

BIGGA **Annual General Meeting**

The AGM of the Association took place at York race-course on Wednesday 23rd March. The meeting was well attended and a considerable amount of Association business concluded, including amendments to the constitution.

The meeting was chaired by outgoing chairman Walter Woods and addressed by Neil Thomas Executive Director, Kevin Munt (Regions), Bill Lawson (Magazine) and Cecil George (Education).

A full report of the proceedings will appear in the next issue of *the Golf Course*.



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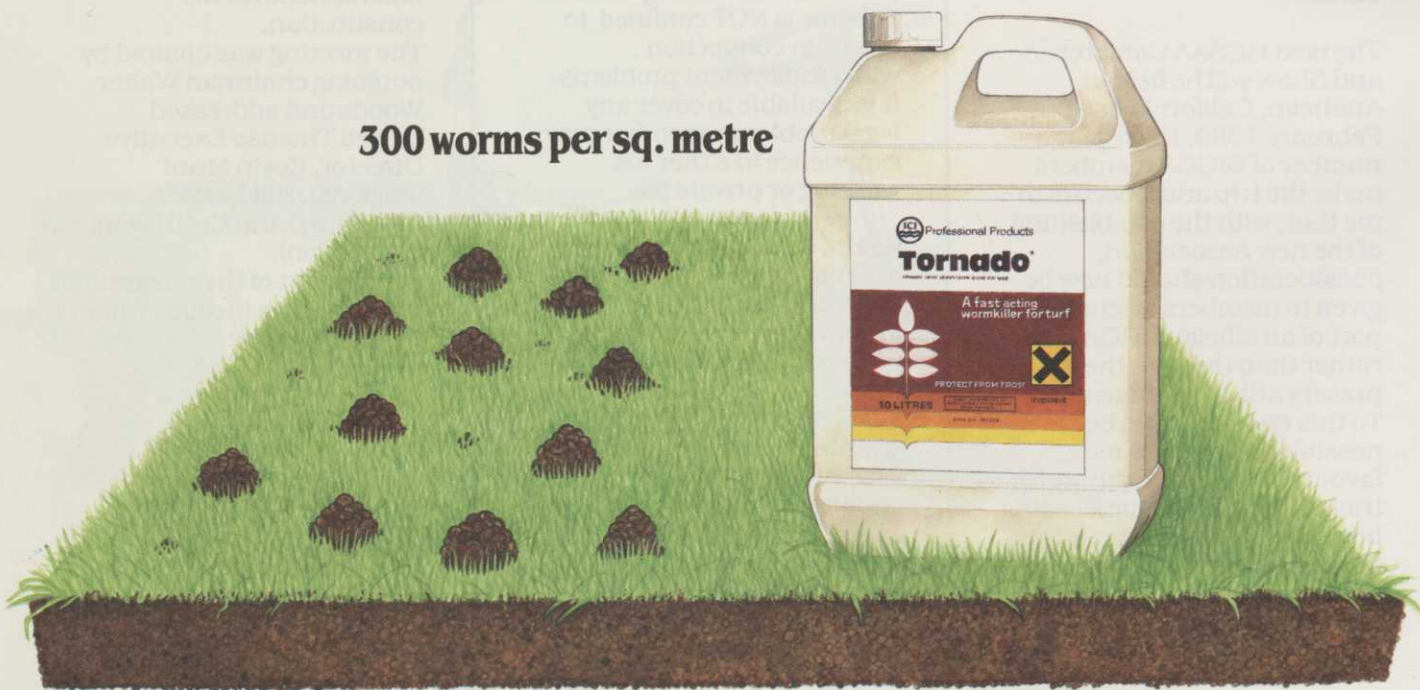
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An open letter to members of BIGGA

It has been suggested that I address members directly, to emphasise that my non-involvement in greenkeeping affairs in the past months was in no way due to any feelings of animosity to explain my reasons for maintaining a low profile.

At a recent meeting of the R & A panel on greenkeeping in York, during lengthy discussions your executive director Neil Thomas advised that he had heard that I was not in favour of the Association and that I wished to see it fail. I was pleased to correct him, nothing could be further from the truth. Likewise one of the Association's trustees Peter Wilson expressed concern about my un-popularity with members, I was also able to advise him that such a view was in contrast to the reception that I am accorded by members who I meet, as well as by members of the Board of Management with whom I am in regular contact.

For some years subsequent to the establishment of EIGGA I had become increasingly concerned at the burden of administrative work placed on those few enthusiastic individuals who were running (in addition to their full-time duties on their own courses) the three separate greenkeeper associations, to the extent that some, if not all had had no holiday for two or more years. Clearly there was a great deal of duplication and wasted cost in terms of time and money as well as reduced efficiency.

This culminated in my writing to the chairmen of all three associations on the 20th September 1985 "offering my services as an honest broker to try to create some foundations on which the three associations could start to rejoin", and suggesting ways of so doing. This catalysed action, with delegates from the other two associations being invited to meet SIGGA on the occasion of their conference at the Younger Hall, St Andrews in October 1985. At that seminar and specifically in response to my urgent representations, Michael Bonallack promised, on behalf of the R & A, financial support towards the cost of setting up some form of centralised administration if the Associations got together.

Subsequently, I was active behind the scenes trying to sort out problems, chiefly made possible because I could telephone the main "activists" on the basis of personal friendship. I was, however, specifically excluded from any involvement with the Steering Committee negotiations.

I am perfectly aware that I have detractors - one cannot please everyone all the time - but my record, I hope, shows that over the years I have worked unceasingly to improve the lot of greenkeepers as well as the regard in which they are held as a profession.

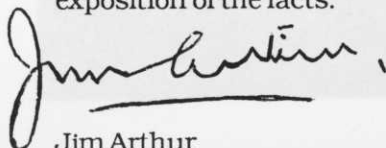
To accuse me of wanting to see BIGGA destroyed when it was my initiative which started the amalgamation is quite incredible. I am the first to admit that my initial aim was to set up a federation to streamline administration in terms of cost as well as efficiency, but if we lose what has now been achieved it would set greenkeeping back at least a decade.

My ambition, now never to be realised, was to see the centralisation of the whole of greenkeeping, advisory, research and education, as well as the greenkeeping association at one centre, to give it a degree of influence, at least the equal of the USGA Green section. In support of this ambition I have in recent years handed over to the STRI, with personal introductions, and every possible help in the handover, virtually all my advisory business, including full files, for no recompense with the sole proviso that a specialist golf advisory team was set up (which has not so far been done) purely in the hope that we might see a continuity of sound advice.

It is my view, that if greenkeepers are to be regarded as part of a respected profession then education must be the main part of the association I would be happy to assist with this in any way I can. It is vital to get away from the golfing society image and to avoid trade dominance of the Association which of course does not mean spurning well-meaning offers of assistance.

Since I am assured by so many people that my detractors are not a majority, I have responded at last, to repeated invitations to submit 'educational' articles of publication for the magazine in only because never has it been more necessary to agree the basic principles of greenkeeping, under constant attack from every quarter.

May I take this opportunity of re-affirming my good wishes to the Association and to wish it every success in the future, coupling this with the hope that it will make education the linchpin of its constitution and would also like to thank my readers for bearing with me in my exposition of the facts.



Jim Arthur



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Successful seminars

by Michael Coffey

DURING March the Scottish Region of the BIGGA and the North West Section held two excellent educational seminars.

The venue for the Scottish regional conference for greenkeepers, groundsmen and convenors was the headquarters of the Scottish Countryside Commission at Battleby in Perthshire. The lecture theatre was first class and after an introduction by Neil Thomas, who acted as chairman for the day, the Commission showed a three screen, six projector slide show of their work in Scotland. This was followed by Duncan Gray whose slide presentation on the restoration of the famous Lahinch links had everyone enthralled. His presentation should be made into a film by the club as part of its historical records. Peter Park of the Scottish Police College then gave an insight into "low maintenance amenity planting". This was an interesting study in how to keep weeds out of beds by covering them with polythene and gravel which allowed the shrubs to grow through. A flowerbed constructed in this manner will in effect remain

maintenance free for several years. The final speaker of the morning session was Eddie Connaughton, sales manager of Souters of Stirling. Eddie, who has been involved in greenkeeping since 1978 and who went to Purdue University in the USA, chose the topic "The facts and fallacies of poa annua". Although he was at pains to point out that the decision to live with or without this weed was that of each head greenkeeper, he did illustrate some very interesting properties of this grass in its numerous varieties. It was perhaps a pity that more open discussion did not follow this talk. One fact that came to light is that at one University in the US there are no fewer than 110 varieties of poa annua under test to see which are the most suitable - thank heavens for the Atlantic ocean.... After a buffet lunch the session resumed with a speaker from the Countryside Commission giving an explanation as to how clubs might obtain grants for their offcourse areas, for tree planting etc. Walter Gilmour, horticultural adviser to the Glasgow garden festival, followed. His

slide presentation was most interesting and covered the previous two national festivals at Liverpool and Stoke, as well as the preparation for turning a derelict dock in Glasgow into a most exciting festival site. Walter has clearly noted mistakes made at Liverpool and Stoke which will ensure success for Glasgow and attract, it is hoped, some 4.5m visitors (at £5 a time!!) Golf in the public sector is often neglected, but the subject was covered most admirably by Andrew Murray, assistant director, leisure and recreation, Kirkcaldy district council. "Golf course maintenance from a local authority point of view" was his chosen subject. Maintenance would appear to be very much along the lines adopted by greenkeepers at private clubs, but there is more emphasis on the five day working week with only minimal work carried out at weekends, no hole cutting or mowing. During question time Mr Murray explained how he envisaged competitive tendering would work when applied to local authority golf courses, with private firms

bidding against the existing employees of the authority for such tasks as mowing, top dressing, aeration etc. All operations have first to be quantified as to time, manpower and machinery necessary. The final speaker of the afternoon was Cecil George, course superintendent at Lenzie golf club, who spoke on "A year on an 18 hole golf course". Cecil raised a few laughs with his observations on greens committees and lady members. Neil Thomas wound things up, with thanks to all especially Elliot Small. The day was very well attended and organised, and was a credit to all concerned, reflecting BIGGA's commitment to furthering education. The North West Section held their fourth annual seminar at Mere Golf and Country Club two days later. There really can be no better place for a golf related seminar than this club, which provides such marvellous facilities and equally fine fayre. This year's programme was introduced by the North West chairman David Lucas of the Tytherington Club. First to speak was