

This issue

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Front cover:

S.I.G.G.A. in Washington, Walter Woods, Jimmy Kid and Stanley Carr.



ALL IN A DAY'S WORK	6
Students question Jim Arthur	
A CAPITAL SHOW ON CAPITOL HILL	10
Jimmy Kidd reports from the GCSAA conference and show in Washington	
EIGGA NEWS & VIEWS	13
SIGGA NEWS & VIEWS	16
OPEN FAIRWAY	18
You write...	
THE RECLAMATION OF INDIGENOUS TURF	28
Eddie Park continues his series	
NOTEBOOK	33
APPOINTMENTS	46
BUYERS' GUIDE	47

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Comment...

I RECENTLY had the pleasure of attending the annual EIGGA men's dinner at Walton Heath, having played the historic course—thanks go to Clive Osgood for an enjoyable day (writes *Greenkeeper* publisher Michael Coffey). This event, masterminded by EIGGA members Hugh MacGillivray and Kenny McNiven, is first rate. The after-dinner speeches included a notable contribution from Walton Heath secretary Wing Commander Bill McCrea, who said that the greenkeeper gathering was the first occasion since the previous EIGGA men's dinner to fill the club dining room to capacity and there were a number who could not get tickets.

The theme of Wing Commander McCrea's speech was a topical, if familiar one—namely, greenkeeper training. He recalled that at the same event last year he had thought EIGGA was an association committed to improving greenkeeping skills and qualifications through better training. "I have to say I am disappointed by the apparant lack of progress," was his initial salvo. "However, I understand that the Greenkeeper Training Committee has recently recommended that a new *greenkeeping* syllabus be taught on block release at a number of selected colleges." As clubs appreciate that the golf course is their number one asset, he felt sure this system would receive good support from the clubs.

While we wholeheartedly endorse this view, regrettably the facts are often different. All too often we hear of greenkeepers having requests to attend college courses and conferences turned down. At least 15 clubs refused to pay for staff to attend the EIGGA conference at Warwick this month. This attitude must be changed and it is reassuring for greenkeepers to have such an eloquent advocate for training as Wing Commander McCrea, who will hopefully be able to persuade some of his more reluctant colleagues of the benefits.

It is also disappointing to note that a novel scheme, sponsored by Mentzendorf Kummel, to raise money from golf club members, is to be put to only limited use. According to the Peter Alliss article in April's *Golf World*, the National Putting Championship—at 50p a time for a club member to enter—will raise funds for the Golf Foundation and the British Golf Greenkeepers' Association, for which Mr Alliss, as president, is promoting the competition. Are the producers of the excellent 'putting mixture' aware of how many greenkeepers there are in Scotland, England and Wales who, unlike all the UK's golfing youngsters who benefit from the Golf Foundation, will apparently not gain from the proposed new 'Centre for agronomy learning. A sort of huge nursery where young and old greenkeepers could come to lectures and listen to the latest ideas on golf course maintenance machinery, etc'.

We thought that such an organisation existed in the Sports Turf Research Institute—albeit, until recently, sadly lacking in support from golf.

There can be no doubt that this competition is a highly commendable one. However, shouldn't the sponsors look again at the distribution of funds?

The EIGGA annual general meeting—at Warwick University on March 24—elected the following national officers: president—Dennis Ayling (Sussex); vice-president—David Jones (East Anglia); trustees—Kevin Munt (Surrey), Hugh MacGillivray (Sussex), Michael Coffey; chairman of the board of management—Bill Lawson (North West).

• A full report on the annual EIGGA conference and AGM will appear in next month's *Greenkeeper*.

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