

Summit talks

THE establishment of one autonomous body has been the aim of meetings held recently between SIGGA, EIGGA, the BGGGA and other interested organisations in golf. Here, we detail the latest situation as it is known.

Greenkeeper understands that considerable progress has been achieved at the talks.

Originally, the BGGGA was approached by the Professional Golfers' Association, which produced a detailed proposal on how greenkeeping should be structured in the future - as a division of the PGA.

Later, the PGA, after discussions at the Open Championship, put the same proposition to SIGGA and EIGGA. Meetings took place between each of the associations and the PGA at its national headquarters at The Belfry.

The associations seem to have reservations about the advisability of such a takeover and there appears to be insufficient support within SIGGA and the BGGGA, while the EIGGA board of management has already advised the PGA that it is holding talks elsewhere.

During the SIGGA educational conference at the Younger Hall, St Andrews recently, Michael Bonallack, secretary of the Royal & Ancient Golf Club, introducing the afternoon session, strongly recommended that greenkeepers retain their independence and strive for an improvement in status through a unified approach to the profession's future. He felt sure that the R & A would look favourably upon any request for assistance in pursuing this aim.

Since the SIGGA conference, two meetings have taken place, with representatives of the three associations taking part under the chairmanship of the English Golf Union and with a member of the R & A in attendance.

Although nothing has been finalised as yet and another meeting is arranged for early December, *Greenkeeper*

believes that a general administrative centre with a full-time executive officer will be based at Bingley to coordinate events and conferences and to deal with the associations, which will operate on a regional or branch level.

The administrative organisation will be known as the Golf Greenkeepers' Federation with the aim of supporting in a practical form the Greenkeeper Training Committee by getting clubs to train their staff and have an all-qualified greenkeeping profession.

All apprentices will have to qualify and the eventual aim would be to have a system of continuous education, so that even course managers will be required to maintain their qualifications and knowledge by attending seminars. This system should have the support of the golf unions, which will assist with its implementation.

Should the federation come into being - and all the signs are positive - it will give the PGA European Tour, among others, the ideal vehicle for its intended support of 'greenkeeper training and course preparation research' and a worthwhile home for the money the tour received from ICI's Professional Products Division (see page 24 of last month's *Greenkeeper*). Likewise, the federation could act as a focal point for all trade involvement in greenkeeper training.

It is essential that the executive officer, when appointed, should not be a former greenkeeper, but someone with administrative skills and without bias. The committee should be small and of similar composition to the Greenkeeper Training Committee.

While there are, no doubt, many hurdles to clear and personal differences to overcome, it is hoped that all greenkeepers will shortly be brought together under one independent umbrella federation.

EIGGA NEWS & VIEWS CONTINUED...

and some 30 members and guests attended.

The course received a good deal of praise - Alan and staff are to be commended. We were well looked after in the clubhouse and, once again, members of the trade gave us good support. I make special mention of Maxwell Hart, Parkers, TMS and May & Baker.

There is a lot of work involved in putting on such a day, so thanks go to Ed, Brian and Sevi for all their hard work. (Brian wishes to thank M. Warner and M. Strange for handling the raffle).

Finally, a turkey trot is scheduled by Badgemore Park on December 11, starting at 11am.

Billy McMillan.

Eastern

This, the branch's first report, is to let members know that greenkeepers do exist in the east!

Although not a heavily supported branch, the membership is drawn from a large area - from Kettering, Worksop and Lincoln to Skegness and Cambridge, to name but a few. We meet mainly around Grantham, as this is central, and are a friendly group always willing to meet new members. Anyone interested in joining should ring Colin Swingler on Grantham (0476) 68656.

Our autumn golf meeting for the Rigby Taylor Trophy was held at Stoke Rochford Golf Club by courtesy of the captain Peter Bloodworth. The course, in a superb setting, was in excellent condition, thanks to Gilbert Ogden and his staff. It proved a hard test on a windy day.

The trophy and prizes were presented by Steve Dickinson of Rigby Taylor. The cup was won by Steve McCrossan of Burghley Park with Roy Harrison of the home club losing out on the last nine holes. The non-greenkeeper prize was won by Brian Booth.

We are hoping to arrange a further golf day sometime in March, when members will be invited to bring along a committee member to play.