

know that education is a wonderful thing; and you should be aware that our education will improve your golf course.

Yours for improvements

● **The writer prefers to remain anonymous, stating that he is already regarded as something of an Arthur Scargill locally!**

To the Editor

Having just returned from an extremely entertaining and informative day spent with fellow BIGGA members at the Ransomes factory at Ipswich, I would like to express my thanks to them and say how grand it was to see the progress of cold steel entering at one end and finished products rolling off the line at the other! Our trip was organised by Paice's of Maidstone and we thank both them and the coach driver who battled through blizzard conditions to return us safely. Should other members be afforded the opportunity to visit Ransomes they may be assured of its excellence.

NIGEL STAPLEY

Head Greenkeeper, Darenth Valley G.C.

● **Having also enjoyed a similar tour, I can endorse Nigel's comments. My understanding is that such visits form a regular part of Ransomes programme, one where an exchange of ideas brings benefits to both parties. - D.W.**

To Neil Thomas

I write to thank you and the BIGGA staff for an enjoyable week at BTME and to opine that the hard work was well worth while. This is not just my view, but one shared by all from the Mid-Anglia section who attended. I have two suggestions to make: 1) I would like to see the presentation of the TORO Young Greenkeeper, the ICI Premier Greenkeeper and any Master Greenkeeper or National Tournament and ISEKI award winners being presented and properly feted by their fellow members in front of a gathered audience at, say, the end of one of the seminars. 2) I feel that with two consecutive drought years having passed, a paper covering this subject should have been included.

On the subject of Master Greenkeeper certification, I hope in time that all greenkeepers will seek to gain this qualification, thus enabling them to be on par with their American counterparts. One year ago I was quite content. I had 10 years experience as a head greenkeeper and some qualifications, but when MGC was introduced I soon realised that I was under qualified. Since then I have been to a National Conference, entered the ICI Premier Greenkeeper competition, attended workshops and seminars at Harrogate, spent nights at college sitting C. and G. Phase IV and am about to take the Pesticide Spraying Course.

In my case, education has clearly helped me to learn more about greenkeeping and management and to gain more qualifications. I will encourage fellow greenkeepers in Mid-Anglia to follow the M.G.C. route and hope that all greenkeepers throughout the land will follow suit. Perhaps this will eventually see an end to talk about what is due to the poor old greenkeeper, for we do so much NEED to be better qualified.

JOHN WELLS

Head Greenkeeper, Welwyn Garden City G.C.

To the Editor

Congratulations on the new magazine, which has obviously had great thought and a deal of hard work put into it and is real winner! Visually it is excellent and the photographs are first class, as is the 'readability' and size. I have to say even the adverts look better and result in them being better observed and acted upon. I realise more than most about funding such an enterprise and am fully aware of the need for trade advertising, but in retrospect our old mag. had the look of a trade advertising only paper about it and it was hard to find real 'greenkeeping issues'. My wish now is that you continue to give a good 'mix' and place firm emphasis on technical articles. Also please give greater exposure to highlighting individual premier greenkeepers and their trials and tribulations. I'll end by saying 'well done' and keep up the good work.

CHRISTOPHER BROWN

Head Greenkeeper, Tidworth Garrison G.C.

BIGGA flies the flag in the United States

A visit to the GCSAA conference, held this year in the desert city of Las Vegas, was taken by a group of some 40 greenkeepers and officials from BIGGA and the IOG and proved to be an enlightening experience for all concerned, being in the words of Kevin Munt "ten days of culture shock."

Reasons for making this long air flight are many and varied, with an official BIGGA stand engendering interest world-wide in our own BTME exhibition, creating an open market place for the promotion of our Association and the enrolment of many new members, together with the generation of valuable magazine advertising and affording an opportunity to learn from the style and intensity of American educational seminars. Others, such as Anthony Davies, were there as part of the winning ICI premier Greenkeeper Award and still more had elected to make this a holiday with a difference. What a difference it was became apparent just as soon as Las Vegas loomed in sight, with illuminations on the 'strip' making Blackpool seem like a back garden firework display and the 24 hour gambling casinos awash with punters eager to win - or lose - a fortune. Flying in a Cessna light aircraft over the Hoover Dam and the north rim of the Grand Canyon was a decided highlight from the tourist angle, and a visit to a University arboretum an enlightenment, briefed on the problems of growing grass, trees and shrubs in a desert climate.

But to return to the conference and show

proper this was, in everyone's view, an 'eye-popper'. Imagine if you will the prospect of 16400 people attending the show and over 2500 attending seminars, with many of the popular ones 'sold-out' months in advance. Imagine too the prospect of an exhibition hall the size of Wembley Stadium - officially quoted as 175,000 square feet - packed to capacity with 591 exhibitors demonstrating every con-



At the BIGGA stand: ICI Premier Greenkeeper Award winner Anthony Davis, left, BIGGA Chairman Ivor Scoones and David Norton, Toro Scholarship Award winner

ceivable form of green management equipment - plus the full quota of gimmicks - and you'll know why three days is necessary in order to take everything in.

One particular session, given by the American Society of Golf Course Architects, especially caught Kevin Munt's attention, entitled: "Can we co-exist with the environment?" "rather a strange question to pose" he said, "considering that golf has been co-existing with the environ-

ment for some 400 years". After listening to an overview of the current US environmental situation, and being 'treated' to a number of controversial papers, one of which was entitled 'United States Sets Standards for Design Considerations World Wide', Munt was left making the plea that all conference organisers should ensure ample time be given so that speakers cannot escape such pontificating without having to field questions. A valid point.

Few could have failed to be impressed by the overall size and grandeur of this 62nd GCSAA Show, though a comment heard from more than one source suggested that speech-making during a meal attended by many hundreds is not conducive with grabbing attention. As a learning experience it was eminently worthwhile, for in taking from the good, and rejecting the not so good, our Association thrusts still further forward into the nineties in a mood of great optimism.

In conclusion, the highlights outweighed any minor disenchantment that may exist with the views often expressed, that everything in the land of Stars and Stripes is bigger - and therefore better - than on our side of the 'pond'.

A grand time was had by all and the vast amount of work and organisation put in by Brian Robinson and Elaine Jackson of the IOG was rewarded with very many happy folks indeed, all of whom expressed a wish that they might return again in '92, when the 63rd Show will be staged in New Orleans, Louisiana.