

New magazine represents 'a giant step forward' for the industry says Viscount Whitelaw

A President and a gentleman

It is no secret that our President, Viscount William Whitelaw, is no mere figurehead when it comes to representing the Association. It was therefore no great surprise – though indeed an enormous delight – that he took time from his unbelievably busy schedule to pay a visit to Aldwark Manor recently to see for himself the progress we have made. That his arrival should coincide with the publication of the March issue of Greenkeeper International was perhaps too good an opportunity for us not to invite his views, and we were all delighted with his astute observations and acclaim for what he described as 'a giant step forward and a huge improvement in the Association's publishing of information critical to the future education and advancement of the professional greenkeeper.'

As a golfer of no mean skill and a most astute observer of all things pertinent to our profession, Viscount Whitelaw shares the view of all modern greenkeepers that a better future lies in following the path of increased knowledge through education and training, and in setting high standards through exemplary professional conduct. It became clear to us all, as he talked freely of his aspirations for the Association, that preservation of the environment was uppermost in his mind, applauding as he did the great efforts greenkeepers make in upholding the environmental balance and of the responsibility we demonstrate both as professionals and as inhabitants of the universe.

Touring our offices, he was greatly impressed to learn of the steadily increasing numbers joining the Association and was struck by our use of computers in keeping up-to-the-minute records. To prove the point, Debbie keyed in his own member-

ship details, a move that provoked his comment, 'it's a far cry from the old days of biscuit tins and card index boxes – a fine example of moving greenkeeping technology still further into the future.'

Elucidating on advancements observed in golf administration since the publication in 1989 of *The Way Forward*, he opined that in such a relatively short time it was encouraging to see many Golf Clubs taking the contents seriously and acting upon the recommendations. He also hinted that there was an 'imminent' likelihood of further recommendations in the offing – involving important structural changes in administration – the impact of which is likely to advance the further development of our Association – particularly in the sphere of education. On that score we wait with bated breath and hope to report further revelations in our May issue, following Nick Park's report and question and answer session on *The Way Forward* at the BIGGA Education Conference in York.

Before leaving, Lord Whitelaw took further time to chat with board members and magazine staff before posing for the almost obligatory photographs, which in a day blessed with overcast skies and drizzling rain could not have been too comfortable. Looking fit and relaxed and remaining good humoured to the end, he left us with the lasting impression that we are fortunate indeed to have him as our President; and that he will continue to campaign vigorously on our behalf – who could ask for more?

The weather wasn't kind but the welcome was warm for Viscount Whitelaw, pictured outside BIGGA headquarters with Chairman Ivor Scoones, left and Executive Director Neil Thomas. Education Officer David Golding is on the right



Viscount Whitelaw with the magazine team, from left, Tim Moat and David White, and Bill Lynch and Carol Dutton

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