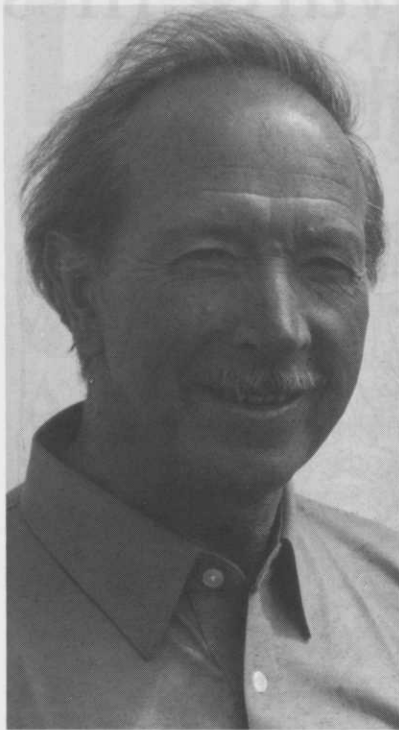


ELLIOTT SMALL pays tribute to **CECIL GEORGE**, 'a man o' many pairts' who's now retiring



BIGGA's valuable ambassador

As we say in Scotland, Cecil George is 'a man o' many pairts': greenkeeper; educator; committee member; secretary; chairman; president; editor; poet and sometime singer of 'auld Scottish songs'.

Cecil began his greenkeeping career in 1943 at Whitecraigs Golf Club, a war intervening and taking him into the Parachute Regiment (if you can get him to relate stories of that time, don't miss them, they're as good as some of his old greenkeeper memoirs) before returning him to Whitecraigs, from which he moved to Fereneze and Cathcart Castle. Finally settling at Lenzie Golf Club, Cecil has remained true and loyal to the Club and only after 37 happy years is he hanging up his hat. Always renowned for preparing his course in first class order, many young greenkeepers received their own training at his capable hands.

Members of BIGGA will know Cecil from his annual participation at The Open Championship and for his many other Association activities, though what they will not know is the part he played in ensuring that greenkeepers were respected and recognised as professionals – and his gigantic contribution to the greenkeeper training cause. Greenkeeper training was and still is Cecil's passion, though in his early days there was no specific formal training for his craft and he was to attend night school at Glasgow Horticultural College for three years in order to gain his Certificate in Horticulture.

In the 1960s he was instrumental in setting up the first ever training courses for apprentice greenkeepers – at Glasgow's Woodburn House – and apart from his valuable initial impetus he also aided in the establishment of the specific

courses and with Bob Moffat both taught and examined the pupils.

Throughout his long membership of SGCA, SIGGA and now BIGGA, his enthusiasm for education has never waned. First education convenor for the West section, then education convenor for SIGGA and now Scottish Region Chairman of The Liaison Committee with the five Scottish colleges – which he was instrumental in forming, Cecil has also been the Scottish representative on the Greenkeeper Training Committee since 1986.

His contribution as speaker and chairman at our many seminars and conferences has extended over many decades, with one of his highlights being that of representing Scotland at the first European Greenkeepers Conference in Switzerland in 1972.

However, it is not only in the field of education that Cecil has made his mark, for during his long career his service to the West section as member, secretary and chairman is second to none. As a list of achievements, consider the following: SIGGA President 1960 and 1972, Vice President 1974, Editor of Turfcraft (the SIGGA Publication) 1974. Captain of Scottish Team – 1st Ransomes International 1973 (bringing the team to victory), and to mark his retirement he was invited to be Scottish Captain at Fulford in 1991. When BIGGA was first formed, Cecil was an obvious choice to represent Scotland as one of our representatives on the Board of Management.

As I began, Cecil is the essential 'man o' many pairts', though apart from this catalogue of dedication and selfless hard work, he is one who always has time to enjoy himself and can be relied upon to tell a good tale or sing a good song when the business of the day is finished.

On December 13th the Lenzie Golf Club are staging a dinner in honour of Cecil's years of service to the Club, a measure of the esteem in which he is held indicated by the event being a total sell-out! He may be retiring from greenkeeping but he is as keen as ever to continue the good work begun so many years ago and will continue to be BIGGA's most valuable ambassador.

To Cecil George, may you enjoy a long and happy retirement and may your dear wife Margaret enjoy sharing in your new found freedom and enjoy seeing a little more of you! All members of BIGGA echo our good wishes, none more than those college trained greenkeepers, who have every reason to thank you for their success.

● Elliott R Small is Scottish Region Administrator.

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