

## A Greenkeeper International tribute to supporters of the Greenkeeper Education and Development Fund.

Number 2: ROGER MOSSOP and DAVE SIDDON,

ICI Professional Products



Mention ICI to the layman and he might be forgiven for thinking that this conglomerate, for that is what it is, with all that enormity and strength in the world of commerce and industry conjures up, is an unapproachable, remote superpower. Useful; yes, fantastic products; yes, market leaders undoubtedly and innovators unquestionably. But that stated, the man in the street thinks of ICI in terms of BIG business, of the share market and of being more in keeping with the boardroom and of those who move in the mysterious corridors of power. Dare to put that same suggestion to a greenkeeper, however, and the likely come-back will be an entirely different, humanised story.

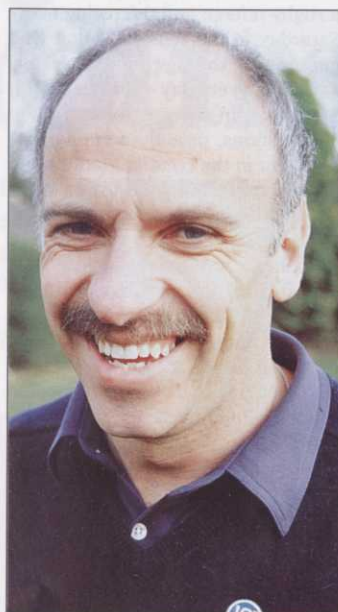
To the greenkeeper, ICI – or, more specifically, ICI Professional Products – represents a close and caring organisation with the turf manager and his interests very much at heart. Granted, the company is in business to make a profit, as indeed is every company save those few which are propped-up by governments, but with this particular section of ICI's empire, the feeling one gets when talking to the team at Professional Products is of genuine involvement with the folks at grass roots level.

Of course, ICI means different things to different people. To the golfing greenkeeper it means the BIGGA National Tournament, now in its second year of sponsorship by ICI Professional Products and increasingly the most prestigious event in which to compete. To the thriving young academic greenkeeper it means a crack at becoming ICI Greenkeeper of the Year. Ask Anthony Davies and David Whitaker, the victors of '91 and '92, what this represents and they will tell you that being crowned ICI Greenkeeper of the Year has changed their lives. To every greenkeeper it represents professionalism and technical superiority in the fine turf care product market.

To find out more about ICI Professional Products, of its relatively short history within the parent company and of those who mastermind the operation, I met up with Roger Mossop, marketing manager, and David (Dave to his friends) Siddon, national sales manager, at Walton Heath Golf Club and prepared to



Roger Mossop



Dave Siddon

# FACE TO FACE WITH THE BIG FRIENDLY GIANT

quiz them.

Did I say that ICI was a giant? Our particular 'giant' comprises just ten people – managers, area sales managers and office personnel – based at Fernhurst in Surrey though blanketing the country through a network of distributors. Professional Products began life as a separate entity, launched at Windsor in '83, primarily as the recognition for sports amenity specialisation took hold. ICI had some wizard products

which had hitherto been serviced to greenkeepers by ICI's agrochemical or garden product divisions. With nationwide acclamation of ICI's then new growth retardant Paclobutrol, the stage was set for a specialist group – ICI Professional Products – to market these and other products and provide the vitally important technical back-up so essential to the fine turf industry.

Dave Siddon was one of the earliest pioneers, joining Keith Cleverly

in bringing the new infant forward and increasing the total workforce by 100% – from one pioneer to two! Keith had moved from ICI Agricultural and Dave joined him from ICI Garden Products, both men hell-bent on making the world take notice of this new company – and succeeding! The pioneering over, Keith was soon to move to another division, presumably to wave his magic wand in a different direction, and his place was taken by Roger Mossop, again an ICI agricultural specialist, whose task was to be marketing manager. If there is one note of sadness to the success of Professional Products it came when Keith Cleverly died shortly after, cut down in his prime by a brain tumour and cheated from seeing the triumph that was to come.

Roger Mossop had all the right credentials to take him to the top: college educated with an agriculture and forestry base, thence to Harper Adams in Shropshire to take a National Diploma in Agriculture and finally to University College, Bangor, to gain a BSc Honours degree in Agriculture with Agricultural Economics. Straight from university to ICI, he joined ICI Agrochemicals in '72, following the technical sales path from trainee to senior rep. (in East Yorkshire) before becoming an area sales manager in '84, training others in the art of professional selling and achieving all that was set before him. Above all, Roger possesses that impish sense of humour so essential in any marketing operation, coupled with an encyclopaedic knowledge of his chosen industry – the perfect passport. He's a keen sportsman, having captained his rugby team at Harper Adams and been capped for University College. He plays an aggressive game of squash, works out regularly in the company gymnasium, plays golf (claiming to be at an embryonic stage, though as Dave pointedly remarked, he's a real mean performer when battling against him!) and has a deep interest in motor cycle racing. He carries this latter interest full circle by spending time in restoring a favourite 1950s classic – a BSA Bantam De Luxe!

Dave Siddon was quick to point out that Roger is the perfect 'sounding board', the essential deep thinker who can and does evaluate the brilliant ideas from the impracti-

# 'The formation of BIGGA was music to our ears... it was the best thing that could have happened'

cal, the ideal partner in what is undoubtedly a doubles match. If one was to draw a comparison in sport, they act together like a perfect golfing foursomes partnership, playing shot and countershot.

Both men have inordinate pride in their company, pointedly so with the high esteem in which Professional Products is held in the industry. "This is not something that just happens", Dave said; "we are ever conscious in our desire to achieve the highest standards throughout: products, packaging, people, service and distribution. We've a worldwide reputation to live up to and nothing is ever left to chance". We touched on the importance of environmental awareness, Roger making the point that with this issue uppermost in their minds (and government legislation aside) this has always been a vital issue for ICI. Interestingly, the cost of achieving, indeed going beyond, mere environmental acceptance is the highest single expense in producing all ICI products.

Like Roger, Dave Siddon has a long career with ICI as his professional background, some 17 years in total, which from the very beginning has been deeply entrenched in sales.

He began as an ICI Garden Products rep., joined Professional Products in '84 as territory manager in the North and has been national sales manager since '88. He's a positive power-house at both work and play, having been an active rugby and football player, remaining an active cricketer and recently qualifying as a rugby referee and refereeing every Saturday in the season! If that isn't enough, at the age of 41 he runs five miles every day - further still on Sundays - in training for marathon competitions, proudly pointing to a highlight in the London Marathon in '89 when he finished with a storming time of 3 hours 30 minutes! On top of all this Dave plays golf to a 14 handicap, encourages his wife Jane to join him in marathon training, encourages both his sons to further honours in rugby (both have been capped for Bedfordshire), and crams into a day what many people would consider tough work for a week. He can make a mere mortal like me feel tired just talking about his average day, beginning at 6am and ending only when the work of managing a national sales force and 17 distributors is done!

Turning to the BIGGA connection, I learned that Professional Products

had sought involvement from the very start, indeed even in the days of EIGGA, BGGGA and the like they had been active in supporting the greenkeeping cause. The formation of BIGGA was, to quote Roger, "music to our ears". At last we could see fragmentalised groups united and it was the best thing that could have happened". From the earliest days of Harrogate, when they sponsored the seminar programmes, BIGGA and Professional Products have sat comfortably in each others pockets, each gaining from the other in terms of exposure to the men that matter - the greenkeepers of Britain. Apart from their initiative in national promotions - Greenkeeper of the Year and the National Tournament - they are active at sectional level and see this as an important way of reaching the groundswell of greenkeeper activity. Offering an opinion, Dave says: "We are committed to a strong association and see an essential part of our activity as the marketing of greenkeepers. To put it more succinctly, the PGA European Tour market themselves well but would be nothing without the courses on which

tour events are played - this I see as the greenkeepers' ace card. BIGGA must aim to market this ace card in the most vigorous fashion, to seek a greater share in the fortunes if you like, for they are out there to be grabbed, though in the hands of professional golf in the main - it is an absolute strength upon which to grow even further and even quicker. Greenkeepers, through BIGGA, must market themselves in order to get a stronger foot hold in the world scene". To take from an old and wise saying, Dave further suggests that greenkeepers should heed the call to 'ask not what your association can do for you, ask rather what you can do for your association'.

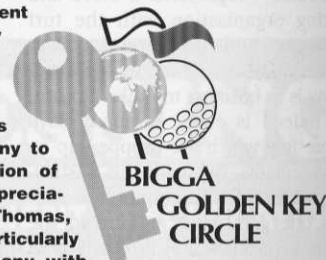
If one was to summarise ICI Professional Products it would be to see it as a tightly knit team. When you talk to an area sales manager you are talking to a team, when you make a 'phone call to Fernhurst you are talking to a team, pose a technical question and the team moves swiftly into action. See them at national level and the team spirit is startlingly apparent. The essential teamsters are Dave Siddon and Roger Mossop!


**BIGGA's Education and Development Fund continues to be boosted by new donations.**

Hambro Legal Protection Ltd, who provide legal protection services for the Association and its members, are the latest company to support the Fund with a donation of £250. In expressing BIGGA's appreciation for their donation, Neil Thomas, Executive Director, said: "I am particularly delighted that Hambro, a company with whom we work closely, have made this contribution. Such donations give an impetus to the new Fund and I hope many more companies, groups and individuals will add their financial support and so enhance the educational and training opportunities which can be made available for greenkeepers."

Readers of Greenkeeper International will be aware that Colin Gregory has recently moved from Iseki Ltd to become Managing Director of Hardi Ltd. The company has now joined the Golden Key Circle and in a ceremony which saw the presentation of a cheque - as pictured on this month's front cover - Colin Gregory expressed his enthusiasm for the new Fund: "Hardi Ltd is fully supportive of all that BIGGA is doing to advance greenkeeper education and training," he said. "I am sure the Education and Development Fund will have a major impact in channelling the resources of the game and the industry into a central fund which will enable training resources to be provided, courses to be established and scholarship awards funded. Membership of the Golden and Silver Key Circles is an excellent way for companies to support greenkeeper education."

A real friend and supporter of greenkeepers and all things greenkeeping is Jim Fry, pictured, President of the South Coast Section. Jim seems to be present at all major BIGGA events and was recently spotted at the GCSAA Conference and Show as a member of the BIGGA party. Over the years his contribution to his section has been both substantial and much appreciated. Jim has an infectious sense of humour and is always ready to give unobtrusive advice and guidance when requested. Neil Thomas comments: "I am particularly pleased to record that Jim has become the first individual Member of the Golden Key Circle and on behalf of the Association I would wish to express our great appreciation to him for his generous support of the new Fund."





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