

Yee har: Rounding up Ma Rion and the Westurf gang



I was on special assignment. I'd had the whisper from my 'grass' and come up with a place and a date – Long Ashton Golf Club, Wednesday 28th April.

Something big was going down but I was not sure how big. The word was that Ma Rion and her boys had organised something special. All the local 'dealers' were in on the act and some of the big 'gangs' from up country were in for their share of the 'cut'.

I didn't know what to expect so I went prepared for anything. It was my big chance to catch all these 'operators' in one go so I packed my shooter, jumped in my jalopy and headed out for Westurf.

They were sure of their security and as I swung in off the road a guy in uniform smiled and waved me through. I parked up and went to take a look around.

I was amazed, everyone was there and thousands of punters were checking out the merchandise. Some of the hardware on show was unbelievable. I kept my ear to the ground and one gang boasting about how it had cut down some 'bent grass' and another said he had a 'bandit' that did the best 'topping' job around. One dealer was openly offering 'ransom' deals while the main talk among the punters was about two hit men, Jim and Arthur, who had clashed with the authorities many times but no-one had managed to put them down.

There was one spot in particular that was crawling with uniforms. I was sure this was HQ and decided to take a closer look. When I got near, the uniforms closed in. A big guy asked me if I had seen the latest magazine. I couldn't

even see his machine gun but I took his drift and told him I was looking for the John. He directed me to this crazy guy who said he was a big 'supplier' and had some of the 'purist organics' around and did I want to sniff some. The man next to me said he'd tried some and it was the best 'grass' he'd ever had.

I glanced through the window of HQ and my blood froze. There was no mistaking that profile and that curl of smoke, it was Ma Rion herself and something big was happening. I could see the infamous Red Coats from up north, I knew it was my one chance to bag them all at once.

One of the Red Coats came out of HQ and the uniforms huddled round to protect him. Without a second thought, I made my move. I burst through the door my gun at the ready. Ma Rion didn't flinch, she looked me straight in the eye and said did I know anything about the 'Silver Key'. This threw me completely off guard and at that moment I felt an almighty thump on the back of my head and I passed out.

When I regained consciousness my head was spinning and I had a lump on my skull the size of a golf ball. This wasn't surprising as it was a golf ball that had hit me. Men in weird hats and funny shoes were bending over me and asking if I was alright and didn't I hear them shout 'Fore'?

As my head cleared I asked them what the date was? – March 25th – Thank God! For one minute I thought I had missed Westurf.

Catch the Action. Westurf – Long Ashton Golf Club – April 28th – be there!



Ma Rion – organising 'something special'

'SUPERGRASS'

Campaigner for every greenkeeper in the land

The life of Norman Exley is best understood not by what he achieved for himself, considerable though this was, but by what he achieved for his fellow man. Listening to him at the BTME just days before his death, it was clear that the widespread euphoria celebrated that week was something he identified with as being in part of his making, albeit in the most modest of ways, for no man strove harder or worked more diligently than he to improve the greenkeeper's image, awareness or need for professionalism.

In a quiet moment he said, "I always knew we would get there in the end, and this week has proved my point beyond doubt – our profession has arrived!" His pride positively radiated.

Norman came to greenkeeping



Norman Exley: always optimistic

as a mature student after studying at Askham Bryan College, settling comfortably into work that he found totally rewarding, for the past ten years a cornerstone member of the staff at his beloved Northwood Golf Club. From his home base at Northwood he masterminded the Association's affairs

for his fellow greenkeepers, at first managing the old EIGGA London section, along with Martin Peters, and eventually taking on the major administrative role for the BIGGA South East Region, cajoling, coaxing, organising and rebelling as only he knew how.

Always optimistic, often against the odds prevalent in the hierarchy of golf club management, Norman could best be described as having the zeal of an evangelist when fighting his corner, for his corner was also that of his fellow man, his resolve never wavering for a moment – he was a campaigner for every greenkeeper in the land, and he was winning the battle.

An avid golfer, Norman demonstrated his love for the game not only by playing, but by again

being an organiser of such wonderful events in the greenkeeping calendar as the Walton Heath Gentlemen's Golf Tournament and Dinner and, his lasting memorial amongst so many, the 1992 BIGGA National Tournament at Littlestone.

Norman Exley's influence and contribution within the British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association will not be forgotten, his example an encouragement for others to stride forward with real purpose and genuine pride.

The sincere condolences of all BIGGA's members are extended to Linda at this sad time.

■ Norman Exley, greenkeeper, golfer, BIGGA regional administrator, born Manchester 11 June 1936, died London 6 February 1993.