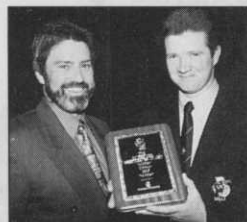


Managing membership

Win the ICI Premier Greenkeeper Award and visit San Francisco

Judged by your peers to be the best of the best is a rare achievement in itself. But for the winner of the 1994 ICI Premier Greenkeeper Award, that achievement will turn into an unforgettable experience with a place on the BIGGA trip to San Francisco for the 1995 GCSAA Exhibition and Conference. You'll enjoy legendary American hospitality and VIP treatment all the way.



ICI Professional Products' Roger Mossop, left, with the 1993 winner, Gordon Irvine

Other prizes in this most prestigious award include:

- ★ a weekend for two at a top London hotel, with tickets for a West End show of your choice
- ★ a weekend for two at the Aldwark Manor Hotel, York
- ★ ... and all section nominations will receive a memento of the occasion, courtesy of the sponsors, ICI Professional Products.

Entry forms are available from Headquarters or your Section Secretary.

Each section of BIGGA will consider the entries and one nominee will represent each section in a regional final, where in a course visit by representatives of ICI and BIGGA, they will walk the course and have an informal discussion with the nominee.

The five regional finalists will receive a further course visit and will be interviewed at Aldwark Manor prior to a banquet and presentation at BIGGA HQ on 5 December 1994.

Closing date for entries is April 30, 1994 - so don't delay, enter today!

Membership is at the very heart of BIGGA. There is strength in numbers and from 1987 onwards our membership has shown consistent growth. I am often asked just what I consider to be our membership potential and this is a difficult question to answer. In any professional body there will always be only a given percentage of those entitled to join who will actually apply for membership, the remainder citing any number of reasons for a negative attitude. Within BIGGA we now have some 50% of all eligible greenkeepers in membership so membership matters should continue to focus our minds.

The good news is that at the time of writing 763 applications have been received from potential new members for 1994. Conversely, after a membership drive which has stretched since mid-November, we entered March with approximately 1,500 current members still to renew. These have been chased from headquarters with a good response and the next chasing will be at regional and section level. When all is said and done we will look to increase on our 1993 closing membership figure of 5,162. In this year of review, we have the opportunity to look at our membership rates and categories. As far as subscriptions are concerned there are clearly two schools of thought - those who feel that subscriptions should be increased in line with the needs of a professional association and the benefits available, whilst there are those who feel that subscriptions should be kept at present levels both from an economic viewpoint and because they see these levels as most likely to pull in new members. There is always scope to change membership categories but changes need to be made judiciously and only to meet clearly defined areas of need.

What of golf clubs and their attitudes to BIGGA membership? The majority of golf clubs now have an insight into the benefits of BIGGA membership for their employees and as such encourage membership. Not all greenkeepers respond to this encouragement. Other clubs take an opposite view, still seem-

ingly threatened by an association which they see akin to a trade union. Nothing could be further from the truth. Through their representation on the GTC, the Home Unions have agreed to encourage membership of BIGGA and one hopes that the message will get through to those clubs who adopt an insular and sometimes hostile attitude. What justification can there be for a greenkeeper to feel that his employment might be threatened should he join a professional association whose educational and training programmes will ultimately make him much better equipped to perform his role within his golf club? Some golf clubs indeed still actively oppose greenkeepers seeking training and qualifications fearing that they will



BIGGA in focus

BY NEIL THOMAS

then move onto better things.

Let's have a look at the value members get for their membership. First, let's clearly establish that membership for those renewing in 1994 came at a rate of £1 per week or less. From receipt of a monthly magazine to insurance and legal benefits and numerous educational opportunities, this is surely outstanding value for money. It is an old but very true adage that you only get out of something what you are prepared to put in but for the keen and committed individual, his membership allows him to play a full role at section, region and national level, to pursue a number of educational options to his career benefit and enjoy the camaraderie and social aspects of BIGGA whilst being backed by a professional associa-

tion intent on improving the status, training and conditions of service for its members.

The two schools of thought on subscriptions are matched by two schools of thought on who should pay those subscriptions. Club or individual member that is the question. Many are the arguments on this score with those seeing membership of BIGGA as a reasonable part of their employment benefits to be funded by the club, whilst others feel that the individual paying ensures that greater value is placed on membership and there is increased commitment to the Association. What of the renewal process? Non-receipt of the membership invoice, lost in the washing machine, chewed by the dog - there are many intriguing excuses made for late or non-payment. Like most, greenkeepers do not like parting with their money before the last possible moment. So from Headquarters' viewpoint there has to be recourse first to the Constitution and second to a penalty. 'The annual subscription shall be due and payable on the first day of January each year... No member of the Association whose subscription is in arrears by one calendar month shall participate in any of the advantages or privileges of the Association, vote on any question or compete for any prize'. That applies after 31 January. After this any member still to renew has the magazine withheld and by the end of March they are deleted from membership. I wonder just how rigorously the constitution is implemented at region and section level in this regard. It certainly needs to be as, like other organisations, late payment for BIGGA means reduced cashflow.

I hope I have triggered some thoughts on a subject which is the very life-blood of the Association. We do not claim to have the ideal membership systems, categories or subscriptions. We remain open to suggestions on where improvements and changes can be made. This year we will be reappraising the administration and computerisation of membership. I would welcome any views or comments you may wish to put forward.



BIGGA Staff Profile **CLARE DOUGLAS** Membership Services Officer

Clare was one of 38 students to successfully gain a place on a newly-established retail marketing degree course at Manchester Polytechnic - from 10,000 applicants! Now Clare is using her skills to help build BIGGA's membership and her day to day role includes marketing to gain new members and dealing with any queries that may occur. Before joining the Association, Clare was a graduate recruitment officer at Sainsbury's head office in London and worked for Yorkshire Water in their customer services and personnel department. Clare saw her move to BIGGA as an "interesting opportunity" to use her degree.

Golf club rallies round head greenkeeper

Members of a Dorset golf club have raised £2,300 to send a head greenkeeper and his family on a dream holiday to Florida.

Golfers at Tidworth, on Salisbury Plain, have been touched by the plight of Chris Brown's seven-year-old daughter, Samantha, who had a kidney transplant last June and then suffered a series of setbacks, culminating in a 165-day stay in hospital while she had her gall bladder and spleen removed. Her mother, Jan, stayed with her while Chris looked after their other daughter, Kelly, 6, at home.

Chris worked his job around Kelly's school day, starting at 9am and working to about 3.30pm, and his colleagues, Tony Rose, Mark Arthur and Ted Racey, covered for him at weekends.

Samantha, who'll be eight this month, came out of hospital just before Christmas and is now leading a normal life, apart from fortnightly check-ups.

Members of the downland course, where Chris has been working for eight and a half years, four years as head greenkeeper, raised the money through a review night. Villagers have also chipped in another £700 and another member and his wife have offered them the use of their holiday home in Florida.

The Browns expect to go in October.

NEWS

One of longest holes in UK?

Knaresborough Golf Club in Yorkshire is putting the finishing touches to one of the longest holes in the country. The new-look 17th will be 627 yards off the white tees and 553 off the yellow, making the course 6,481-6,254 yards long. If you've got a longer hole, send us a picture and tell us all about it.



There's a new hazard in the rough of the second hole at Hamptworth Golf and Country Club. We wonder what this woman driver's handicap is?

One step beyond course manager

What's the next step after course manager? Operations manager is the answer. And Kevin Munt, course manager at Buckinghamshire Golf Club, has just been appointed operations manager there.

This expansion of duties will involve him in all aspects of club management and operation.

He said: "This is an exciting challenge for me having been involved in the club's development since day one. It is wonderful to be given the chance to play a greater role in an operation that I have vested the last four years of my career to."

Kevin, 36, added: "This is a great reflection on the educa-

tional system developed by the Association in the last seven years. I hope that my appointment will give incentive and help to other skilled course managers who wish to step into overall golf club management. Hopefully it will also serve as a target for young people entering our profession. There are now great opportunities in the golfing world for people who are willing to study and work hard at their careers. In fact, thanks to the standards set by BIGGA and the GTC, it should be far easier for managers to step from the golf course into the clubhouse rather than the other way around."

FLYING DIVOTS

■ BIGGA is setting up a central library of greenkeeping books, so if you have any old books, manuscripts or information, please send them to HQ. The library will be available to members when attending courses at Aldwark Manor or on a normal loan and return basis.

"We now have an excellent opportunity to collate the history of greenkeeping and long-forgotten books can be dusted down and forwarded to headquarters for safe keeping," said executive director Neil Thomas.

The General Committee of the R&A has given the Association a £10,000 grant to help set up the library and purchase rare books.

■ The management of the Erin Group, which produces and supplies gardening products, have completed a management buyout. Richard Grimmer, formerly operations director and managing director, has been appointed group managing director.



■ The Landscape Industries '94 exhibition is to be held on the RASE showground at Stoneleigh on June 8 and 9. More than 170 exhibitors are due to attend.

■ Golden Key Circle member ET Breakwell of Solihull has been appointed a distributor for Allen Power Equipment's Echo range of brushcutters, hedgecutters, blowers and leaf-collectors.

■ Turf Machinery Ltd, supplier of replacement parts, hire equipment and contract services to turf professionals, has moved to larger premises at Morrison House, 3A Monument Way West, Woking, Surrey. Tel: 0483 764467.

■ Brunston Castle Golf Club in Ayrshire is up for sale, two years after it opened.

■ Alfie Fyles, one of Britain's best known caddies, has died at the age of 66. The Southport-based caddie, who had throat cancer, helped Tom Watson and Gary Player win a total of six Open titles.



See you at Westurf

This month's big event is Westurf. The south-west's premier trade show has attracted all the leading names, including ICI Professional Products, Sisis, Farmura, Rhone-Poulenc, Barenbrug, Ruffords, STRI and Rigby Taylor. The show takes place at Long Ashton Golf Club, Bristol on Wednesday April 27 and parking and admission are free.

★ If you've got a story, call Chris Boiling on 0347 838581

NEWS

Pre-tax loss for Ransomes

Grass machinery manufacturer Ransomes has reported a loss before tax of £8.9m despite a turnover of £165.8m, six per cent up on '92.

The operating profit before exceptional items was £5.3m, but exceptional charges of £5.8m to cover a major restructuring programme and interest charges of £8.4m took the company into the red.

"You may be surprised at the size of the loss," group chief executive Peter Wilson, pictured, said, "but we felt it was important



to get all the bad news behind us as soon as possible so we can concentrate on delivering the profitability that we believe exists in this business. We therefore decided to provide fully

for restructuring costs which we will incur in 1994."

Part of the company's new direction includes the consolidation of four divisions into two distinct groups: a consumer division and commercial division. Ransomes' rationalisation plan also includes the closure of the American head office and warehouses in America, France and Germany, and about 100 redundancies, including the elimination of several senior administrative management positions.

"Corporate administrative officers have been removed, and we will insist on a much more hands-on operation style," stated Mr Wilson.

He added that since the 1989 acquisition of Cushman and Ryan brands, very little had been done and the decisions made were not effective. "New management is now in place and wasting little time bringing about change," he said. "We have already achieved a lot in the first two months of this year but much still remains to be done to make us the low cost producer in our industry, and to convince customers that they should choose Ransomes products. We have made a promising start to 1994 with sales up on last year and with a number of new products being introduced to the market. We must strive for continuous improvement in our business."



'Pocket checklist' for greenkeepers

A new pocket information leaflet for BIGGA members is now available. Sponsored by the suppliers of Farmura and Blazon products, the '18 Ways-to-a-Better-Spray' booklet has been specially designed as a pocket checklist reminder for spray operators to consider after they have followed the Codes of Practice and properly calibrated their spraying equipment.

The full-colour leaflet is divided into three sections providing the operator with six important reminders before spraying commences, six points to consider during application and six checks to complete after the operation has finished.

All BIGGA head greenkeepers and course managers will be sent a copy shortly. Additional copies are available from HQ.

■ A free electronic stopwatch and a new Hardi AML 200 Uni-flex Sprayer are the prizes in the Farmura/Blazon 'Better-Way-To-Spray' campaign running until June 30.

To qualify, you will have to order one out of Blazon Spray Pattern Indicator from a Farmura products distributor and you will be sent a stopwatch to assist you in calibrating your spraying equipment.

In addition, the purchasing golf club's name will be entered into a national draw with the winner being presented with a new Hardi 200-litre trailer sprayer complete with 6m boom, PTO drive and diaphragm pump.

Ten Hardi K15 Knapsack Sprayers will be presented to the runners-up. Tel: 0233 756241.

Nicklaus takes the high road

Moving in...

■ **Whitecraigs Golf Club in Giffnock, Glasgow, has a new head greenkeeper – 35-year-old Peter Hall. Formerly the head greenkeeper at Hamilton Golf Club, he moves to the 5746-yard par 73 parkland course to replace Robert Fitzpatrick, who has retired.**

■ **John Bourne & Company Ltd has appointed Janet Gardner to co-ordinate sales and marketing of the amenity contracting and turfcare division.**

■ **Seven hundred jobs have gone at Fisons following a £122 million collapse in profits – down from £123 million in 1992 to just £1 million last year.**

Jack Nicklaus has his eye on a site on the bonnie, bonnie banks of Loch Lomond, next to the troubled Tom Weiskopf designed course which is due to open next year.

Nicklaus is reported to have taken his sons Gary and Jack Jr to look at the land during a recent visit to Europe. If he goes ahead with the project, it will be his fifth course in the British Isles, following St Mellion, Mount Juliet, the Monarch's at Gleneagles and The London Club (which officially opens in July).

The Weiskopf-designed course has been sold to Lyle Anderson, an American businessman, after going into receivership last year. It is expected to open next year with the 220-year-old manor house being converted into a clubhouse.

FLYING DIVOTS

■ IndyCar superstar Nigel Mansell has quit as president of Dartmouth Golf and Country Club, Devon. Rumours that this had anything to do with the BIGGA National Golf Tournament being staged there in August are completely unfounded. Nigel said he is too busy testing and racing in the United States to carry on as president. He will, however, keep his 7.5 per cent stake in the club.

A full preview of the tournament will feature in next month's issue, but greenkeepers intending to compete should contact BIGGA HQ as soon as possible to secure accommodation as Dartmouth is a popular holiday destination in August.

■ Britain came third in the table of foreign country attendance at the GCSAA's 1994 International Golf Course Conference and Show in Dallas. Of the 1,309 foreigners from more than 50 countries at the American equivalent of the BTME, 100 were Brits. Canada, not surprisingly, came top with 467 attendees while Japan was second with 169. Mexico was fourth with 84 and then Germany with 48.

More than 15,000 Americans visited the three-day show and 3,336 sat in on the 58 seminars.

Next year's show is scheduled for February 20-27 in San Francisco.

■ Bournemouth-based Agriland's new sales manager for the south of England is Adrian Long, a qualified greenkeeper and a former student at Askham Bryan College, York. He gained his greenkeeping experience as deputy head at Oslo Golf Club, Norway, and as head greenkeeper at Schonenberg Golf and Country Club, Zurich, Switzerland.



■ The 900 members at Bishop's Stortford Golf Club clubbed together and bought the freehold of the course. Now they will have to build a clubhouse as their present building is on a site where developers want to build 20 homes.

NEWS

Farm estate to become golf complex

This 240-acre farm and parkland estate surrounding Ramside Hall Hotel near Durham is being turned into a golf complex with course manager Roger Shaw coordinating the project.

He started working for the developer, Michael Adamson of Ramside Estates, last September, but construction of the 27-hole course and practice facility only started last month (March).

It is hoped that they will start seeding the fairways and greens in May and that the course will be fully constructed by September, with the opening planned for spring '96.

By then, says designer Jonathan Gaunt, you should find "an unusually mature, well-integrated golf course which is exciting to play and a delight to walk through." He says the views over the surrounding landscape are "delightful".

Much of the course's mature look will stem from the well-established oaks and beeches already on the estate. However, 50,000 extra trees are to be



The Ramside Hall Hotel. Below, a view from the proposed 4th tee

planted in consultation with the Forestry Authority. "Indigenous trees and shrubs will be used to extend and recreate habitats for abundant local wildlife which will thrive in the large areas of rough between fairways, so that even while the new course is establishing, the site will retain a maturity that many take years to establish," says Jonathan.

The main course is a 6,800-yard par 72 layout which aims to be testing without being intimidating or penal, by offering options instead of hit-and-hope obstacles. The features encouraging strategic play include a number of lakes and streams (which also tie in to the drainage and irrigation systems for the courses), sensitive but not over-prolific bunkering, and the careful planting of the new trees. The nine-hole course

has a par of 35 and is aimed at the less experienced golfer. The complex will also have a 1,500m sq chipping and putting green and a golf academy playing out to a 300-yard practice range with various featured targets.

Before Roger joined this project he was course manager at Brancepeth Castle GC, also near Durham. He'd been there for ten years and brought the tired and out-of-condition Harry Colt designed course back to life. Prior to that he was head greenkeeper at Darlington GC for eight years and he served his apprenticeship at Billingham GC.

He brought in designer Jonathan Gaunt, whose credits include a 27-hole complex in Denmark and the Chesfield Downs Family Golf Centre in Hertfordshire.

The construction team is headed by Ian Martin and Bob Hornegold and backed up by agronomist David Stansfield of PSD Agronomy. Drainage is by MJ Abbott of Salisbury and the irrigation system was put in by Par 4 Irrigation of Ripon.

The plan is to build the north of England's largest and best equipped leisure facility, including a clubhouse to open simultaneously with the golf course, and to offer "five star quality at three star prices".



Unhappy choice for Scottish clubs

Three Scottish clubs are having a gun held to their heads – give up the most popular tee times or face a rent rise of 400 per cent or more.

Lord Wemyss' Wemyss & March Estates are building two new golf courses in East Lothian – at Gosford Park and Craigielaw Steading – with a 150-room hotel and 50 houses. The hotel will be finished before the courses, so

the lord wants prime times for guests at three of his other courses in the area – not only until the new courses are built, but also afterwards.

The three existing courses – Longniddry, Kilspindie and Musselburgh – face rent increases of 50 per cent anyhow, but it could be ten times as much if they don't give up the peak tee-off slots of 8-10am and 2-4pm seven

days a week.

Longniddry has been told its rent will go up from £17,000 to £25,000 if it agrees to give up these tee-off times to the landlords, but it will go up to £60,000 or £70,000 a year if it doesn't.

It is understood that Kilspindie Golf Club and the district council which sub-lets the course at Musselburgh are in a similar situation.

FLYING DIVOTS

■ Golf course owners who are having trouble selling their courses could always do what one American is planning. Jack Ridge is going to give his 124-acre course to the nearest the pin on October 9. He is charging a \$2,000 entrance fee and limiting numbers to 3,000 entries – giving him \$6 million. The chosen hole at Bob O Link is the 145-yard 8th, which is fronted by water. The contest will be held over six days with the four closest each day advancing to the final, where they will get four shots to bag the 6,430-yard course.

■ The new head greenkeeper at The London Golf Club's Ron Kirby-designed International Course is 26-year-old Steven Jones. Steven moves to the course, to look after the colonial bent/fescue greens, from the Oxfordshire Golf Club, where he was foreman/irrigation technician. He replaces Simon Grand who has gone to keep the new Lydd Golf Club.

Steven will report to Stephen Marsden, who is now the golf courses superintendent at The London Golf Club, which will have a grand opening in July.

■ Gary Cook, 29, has taken up the head greenkeeper's job at Enmore Park, Bridgewater. He was previously at Annenhill, Kilmarnock.

■ Rhone-Poulenc Environmental Products has appointed three new distributors: RE Rushbrook & Son, Suffolk; Gem Professional, Lancashire; and Amenity Land Services Ltd of Shropshire.

■ Inter Seeds Limited of Inkberrow, Worcestershire, has gained BS 5750 Part 2 as wholesalers and distributors of amenity grass seeds, wild flowers and fertilisers. Tel: 0386 793135.

■ The British Association of Landscape Industries (BALI) has accepted an invitation to join the CBI Council, the governing body of the CBI.