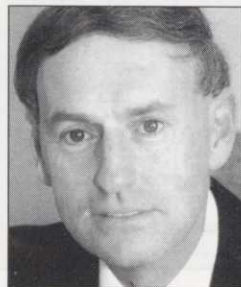


A tale of Nick and George



BIGGA in focus

BY NEIL THOMAS

The Open Championship is without question the premier event in the golfing calendar. For BIGGA it certainly counts as one of our 'majors'. As I write having just returned from Turnberry the Association can reflect on an excellent 'Open'. With one of our leading Course Managers, George Brown, in charge one sensed in the weeks leading up to the championship that we could be in for something special – and so it proved. The golf course was presented in exceptional condition and no less an authority than the R & A Secretary, Michael Bonalack, described it as the best Open Championship course in many years. Praise, including that of the professionals, was unanimous. First and foremost our congratulations go to George and his staff for their professionalism and a job well done.

In a wider perspective how well this reflects on our profession as a whole. To present a golf course as Turnberry was presented demands exceptional skills and great experience. Greenkeepers today are increasingly better educated and more able to take correct decisions for their golf courses amidst the myriad of conflicting theories and practices which abound within the greenkeeping profession. The combination of skills, experience and ever improving educational qualifications manifests itself in the quality of today's top Course Managers exemplified in its highest profile by George Brown and the presentation of Turnberry for the Open. Have no doubt that Turnberry advanced the cause of greenkeepers. The stature of the profession will have been enhanced. The golfing world has been shown what can be achieved, what standards can be set. It is not merely a question of resources. The vital factors are skill, experience, management, commitment, training, team work and not least a love of the profession. Those of us who were privileged to be there witnessed these factors in abundance at Turnberry.

So what of BIGGA's role? There is a misconception founded on faltering beginnings that we are present for one and only one reason – to rake bunkers. Our team is actually known as the 'Greenkeeping Support Team' and that

means support in its widest role as determined in consultation with the Course Manager. How well I recall my first 'Open' with the Association at Royal Lytham in 1988. There in torrid weather conditions we played a vital role in enabling play to proceed as it rained like never before. It is perhaps since that Open that the R & A has recognised the key role we have to play. If the Course Manager wants us out on the golf course early morning or late in the evening volunteers are never in short supply. A greenkeeper accompanies each match to look after the bunkers and enjoys an unsurpassed view of play. I am always impressed by the understanding our members display for the history and traditions of the game as well as their appreciation of the privileged position they enjoy during the championship. Equally they are well aware of the importance of the week for the Association. The R & A provides us with a large marquee in a central position within the tented village and this becomes a focal point for BIGGA members, guests and friends. Often the two TV sets beaming out the triumphs and disasters on the golf course are ignored as greenkeepers discuss greenkeeping – were it not ever so? The week of the championship presents the Association with a major public relations opportunity and this is manifested from start to finish by our emphasis on professionalism. Each team member is presented with two BIGGA shirts and wearing these on alternate days with grey slacks creates an immediate positive image. This dress is complemented by the BIGGA wetsuit – this year to a new design by

A BIGGA Thank you



BIGGA GOLDEN KEY and SILVER KEY CIRCLES

...to the following companies, in recognition of their continued support for the Greenkeeper Education and Development Fund



E.T. Breakwell Ltd



Professional Products

The Toro Company
International Division
Irrigation



Lely (UK) Ltd.
UK distributor for Toro
Commercial Products

HAYTER



RISBORO' TURF

RANSOMES

Together, we're building a great future for golf club, greenkeeper and game

For details of how you can support the Education and Development Fund, Contact BIGGA at Aldwark Manor, Aldwark, Alne, York YO6 2NE. Telephone: 0347 838581 Fax: 0347 838864



BIGGA: BUILDING A BRIGHTER FUTURE

New top man for Turfgrass Council



Peter Helm has been appointed chief executive of the National Turfgrass Council. Peter was formerly horticultural sales manager with ICI/Zeneca. As chief executive, he will be responsible for coordinating and representing the views of the 22 member organisations of the NTC encompassing the major associations and representative bodies of those involved in natural and synthetic sports and amenity turf areas. A keen gardener, Peter had hoped to spend time improving his golf – but he now says with his new job that ambition will have to wait a while.

Crondon Park opens with a 19th hole

A new 18-hole 6,974-yard par 72 course, 9-hole par 3 course and a 300-yard two ended driving range complex has opened in Essex. The Martin Gillett-designed Crondon Park GC at Stock also boast a true 19th hole which will be used when the greenstaff are maintaining one of the other holes and to give flexibility to change the length layout and configuration of the course. The signature hole is the 4th – the green is located at the top of a moated Norman fortress.

Tanks leaflet

Butyl Products Ltd has published a new A4 four-colour leaflet describing its range of lined storage and treatment tanks. For a copy call 0277 653281 or fax 0277 657921.

BIGGA in focus

Walrus and justifiably acclaimed as the most attractive wetsuit at the Open.

Lest you think it is all work and no play, there is a social side to the week. That having been said I should perhaps draw a veil over proceedings. Let us just say that greenkeepers have a good time and the caravan park was enlivened each night. If you managed to survive the cabaret which catered for varied tastes you were doing well! Whenever possible we seek college accommodation for the team but this

NEWS



Heat is on for college's tropical greens project

Myerscough College has developed what it claims is the world's first golf hole *under glass!* The Lancashire college's Warm Season Turfgrass Education Facility – pictured during construction – is designed to recreate the tropical conditions found in many Floridian and Mediterranean courses. It has bunkers, water hazards and supplementary lighting (to keep the temperature hot), and will help sportsturf students learn skills and maintenance techniques which will be relevant if they want to work in the United States or southern Europe.

The green and fairway will become operational late autumn, giving the turf and sub-tropical plants time to establish themselves. To keep bills down, only sponge balls will be used in the glasshouse.

year it had to be the caravan park. The prime problem is that of sleep or the shortage of it! The late nighters and the early risers are known to meet usually around 4.30am! The spirit remains good, however, with much forbearance shown on occasions. Next year at St Andrews we will have the benefit of Elmwood College for accommodation and this should ease this administrator's problems!

So another Open Championship passes by. As we look ahead I am mindful of the need

for newcomers to join the support team – it really is a tremendous experience. We need to balance new blood with some old hands for it pays to know the ropes. Certainly the demand for places on the team is increasing and this year we had to disappoint a number of applicants. In the forthcoming months we will need to consider a selection criteria for 1995 and beyond. We warmly thank the Scottish Region for their input to the success of the week. They won't mind me saying that they have

FLYING DIVOTS

■ Ivor Scoones would like to thank the many members who sent cards and messages of condolence following the passing of his beloved wife Sheila (Ann). These were a great source of comfort to the family during a very sad time.

■ BIGGA's vice-chairman, Barry Heaney, has scored his fourth ace. He did it with a 6 iron at Wortley's 156-yard 5th. "It was a lovely feeling but it cost me a lot of money," he said. In fact it cost him about £70, but it helped the 8-handicapper to a gross 73.

■ One of Kevin Wroe's first big jobs will be preparing for the Hayter Challenge final. 35-year-old Kevin is moving from Weston-super-Mare this month to take over as head greenkeeper at Pannal GC, near Harrogate. Pannal has a team of five greenkeeping staff.

■ Seven-handicap Barry Webster is the new course manager at Ealing GC, the 18-hole parkland course that sometimes gets watered by the River Bront. Barry, formerly assistant course manager at Harpenden, has a team of five and takes over from Julian Doughty, now at Stratford-upon-Avon GC.

■ A new research facility has been launched by ADAS Environmental at their Gleadthorpe Research Centre near Mansfield. Its purpose is to offer an independent research facility for sports and amenity turf to enable the testing of materials, turf care products and techniques in relevant soil and climatic conditions.

some extremely experienced old hands who at times are able to move mountains. Their contribution is vital.

Finally in congratulating Nick Price he was quick to point out that his inspiration for the week came in practice when he appreciated just how well the course had been set up. This brings us back to George Brown and the staff at Turnberry – the plaudits are all yours and you have set standards for the future to which others can aspire. The profession has undoubtedly moved forward.