

# BIGGA's training programmes forge ahead

As I write, our new Education Officer, Ken Richardson, is settling in, making contacts and hopefully beginning to see the wood from the trees in terms of greenkeeper education and training. I am sure that with his training background he will have much to contribute to both our own training programmes and to the development of education generally within the profession. Indeed much is happening on the education front. You will read elsewhere in the pages of this issue of the re-structuring of our annual management courses. This is an exciting development providing members with the opportunity whilst pursuing a course at Aldwark Manor to move towards a nationally recognised qualification. As part of our review this year we will be looking at the Master Greenkeeper Certificate to see if any amendments are necessary to the certification scheme after four years of operation. The status of the certificate continues to be enhanced and I remain impressed by the determination of members to obtain the certificate. As in any examination procedure there are referrals but a referral only seems to reinforce the determination of a member to reach his goal and this surely augurs well for his and the profession's future. Recent comment indicates that those referred are not clearly advised on aspects where they need to show improvement. Ken Richardson is aware of this criticism which will be rectified in future. There will be very real benefits in the years ahead for those recognised as Master Greenkeepers as indeed there will be for their profession and Association.

We will be looking to link the Management Courses with the Training Manual and to examine the feasibility of doing likewise with the Master Greenkeeper Certificate thereby demonstrating a coherent and logical approach to greenkeeper education in broad terms.

## Training initiative

In discussion with the GTC we have agreed on the need for a local training initiative and greenkeepers will thereby be presented with a choice of educational pro-



## BIGGA in focus

BY NEIL THOMAS

vision. Whilst the detail remains to be finalised this local training is likely to be both college or centre based and incorporate a travelling roadshow. There is much administrative work to be undertaken and there will need to be substantial financial provision by the GTC. However I am optimistic that this initiative will commence in September 1995.

## Field Guide

Members will have recently received an on course field guide for the major diseases and pests of fine turf which can be incorporated within their Training Manuals. This is yet another development emanating from the Education and Development Fund and offering practical benefits to greenkeepers. This fund is now in its third year, is firmly established and a vital source in terms of financing future educational projects. Continued support of the fund at all levels is extremely important.

This year will see two further training videos produced. The first will be made commercially with BIGGA backing and advice and will feature mowing tech-

niques. The second will be independently produced and financed by the Education and Development Fund and will feature golf course preparation. Our new library at Headquarters will become accessible for these and future training videos as well as books and will represent a valuable training medium.

## Ecology debate

Discussions are ongoing with regard to the production of a practical guide to the ecological management of the golf course and a decision will shortly be taken on the direction in which this will proceed. Again financing will be provided through the Education and Development Fund. Ecological management is very much a current topic and concern and as an Association we must be at the forefront in leading the debate on behalf of the profession.

## Needs analysis

There is concern at the lack of knowledge at Headquarters of educational developments at Region and Section level and here I see a key role in future for the regionally based Education Conveners. Our Education Officer will be seeking an early meeting with the Conveners essentially to carry out a 'needs analysis' exercise. There must be better coordination in future and indeed common standards and structured programmes implemented at Region and Section level. Any observations or comments you have will be welcomed by Ken Richardson who will seek to canvass a broad spectrum of opinion on the way ahead.

## Conference venue

There has been much debate in recent months on the future timing and location of our National Education Conference. The recent conference at the University of Warwick more than maintained the standards of previous conferences and the enthusiasm of delegates continues to be most marked. Over the last year or so your Board of Management members have been made aware of pressures from within the membership to hold the Conference during the BTME in Harrogate.

I am equally aware of the views of many regular conference attendees who would prefer the conference to continue to be held separately in a university location. Having given in depth consideration to this matter your Education Sub-Committee has recommended that the 1995 Conference be held during the BTME replacing the Workshop programme over the Monday and Tuesday. This will be on a trial basis for 1995 and the situation will be reviewed thereafter. The Conference will be held in the Majestic Hotel adjacent to the Exhibition Halls and this hotel will now become the official Headquarters hotel for the BTME. Additionally we will of course be running the usual Seminar Programme during the Exhibition and here the format will remain unchanged. We are currently planning an exciting speaker programme over the five days and volunteers to present a paper at either the Conference or Seminar Programme will be given every consideration – but please hurry up and let us have your name. Look out for early news of BTME '95 in the BTME Newslines which will be closely followed in September by a new-look programme and booking form.

So there we have it – much is happening in greenkeeper education and with the review underway future initiatives are already being discussed. Members can rest assured that, in accordance with our founding objectives back in 1987, the development of greenkeeper education and training will continue to be our first and foremost consideration.

## BIGGA Staff Profile SAMANTHA COLLINS (Sami) Clerk/typist

Maybe it's because she went to school in Colorado for a year, or maybe it's just because she likes American rock music, but Samantha Collins (or Sami as she prefers to be known) is a big fan of the US of A.

When she's not handling the subscriptions database for Greenkeeper International, answering the telephone or involved in secretarial duties, you'll find Sami in a pair of Levis dancing to "Sweet home Alabama" in her favourite bar. Sami's also a computer whiz and before joining BIGGA worked for several computer companies. "Have a positive attitude – it makes life worth living," she says, philosophically.



## Greenkeeper dies in mower accident

A part-time greenkeeper has died in a horrific accident involving a mower.

It is believed that 60 year old Ronnie Mitchell's anorak drawstring became entangled in the ride-on mower's driveshaft, dragging him into the machine. Although the blades missed him, his head and chest were crushed in the narrow gap between the blade arms and the wheels.

The engine was still running when a colleague at the Bradley Hall Golf Club, Greetland, near Halifax, found him.

A single man, Mr Mitchell had been the head greenkeeper there for 30 years until he retired two years ago.

# NEWS

## Taking over



David Halford, a senior lecturer at Myerscough College near Preston, has taken over the late John

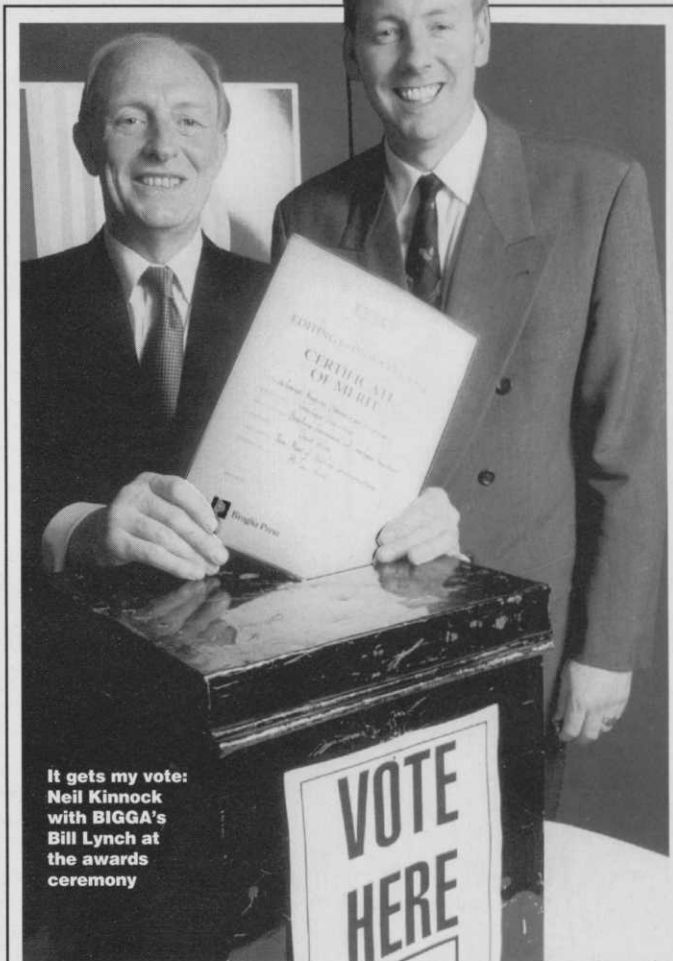
Shildrick's job as secretary of the British Turf and Landscape Irrigation Association. David says it will be a hard act to follow: "John was, to all intents and purposes, the heart of the Association. I will endeavour to maintain the standards he set but it will be difficult."

He will administer BTLIA affairs from an office at Myerscough which has its own golf course equipped with virtually every example of sprinklers used on UK golf courses.

## Waste not...

Wessex Water is selling bags of dried human sewage to golf courses as fertiliser. The odourless pellets are made from sludge that used to be pumped into the Bristol Channel. The company says that, unlike chemical fertilisers, it can be used quickly while the course is still in use and it does not make the grass grow too fast.

The East Sussex National Golf Club has started giving golfers information sheets which show pin positions and Stimpmeter readings before they tee off.



It gets my vote: Neil Kinnock with BIGGA's Bill Lynch at the awards ceremony

## Highest praise for BIGGA magazine

Your magazine, Greenkeeper International, is "superb". We're not blowing our own trumpet, it's official. Judges in the prestigious Editing for Industry Awards, which are organised by the British Association of Industrial Editors, called it "a remarkable magazine", "which hits the mark spot on".

Competing against publications backed by mega-rich companies, Greenkeeper International won a Certificate of Merit alongside Esso's "Update". The winner was "Aspect" from British Gas.

At a presentation in Edinburgh, former Labour leader Neil Kinnock presented the certificate to BIGGA's sales and marketing manager Bill Lynch. Mr Kinnock commented that he had seen the magazine before at a golf course in his Welsh constituency – and was able to recall an article in it from three years ago!

The judges took our description of the magazine – "Self-supporting through its advertising content and recognised as an industry leader" – and added: "Therein lies the perfect appraisal of this remarkable magazine. Jam-packed with full colour ads and till-jangling small ad section providing a healthy platform for well-written, informative and genuinely interesting features that guarantee appeal even wider than the captive audience of greenkeepers. It is very difficult to fault such a superb magazine which hits the mark spot on in a specialist market."

## FLYING DIVOTS

■ Muirfield's course manager, Chris Whittle, is heading back to his roots to take over the head greenkeeper's job at Royal Birkdale. Chris hails from nearby Formby and started his greenkeeping career at Formby GC in the early '70s after a spell in a bank. He is looking forward to returning to Merseyside after nearly six years at Muirfield.

Twelve-handicapper Chris, who has just turned 40, will take over when Tom O'Brien retires in October. He beat nearly 60 candidates to the job of keeping 18 new greens on the Open Championship course.

■ Work has started on a new 18-hole parkland course at Walton, near Wakefield. Waterton Park Golf Club, set in 200 acres, is designed by the Simon Gidman/Chapman Warren partnership with input from Yorkshire's international touring pro Gordon J Brand. It will open for play in September '95 with membership restricted to investors.

■ Barry Neville, a former Student Greenkeeper of the Year, has been appointed deputy head greenkeeper at Stanmore Golf Club, Middlesex. He was previously first assistant at Whitehall Golf Centre.

■ John Houston, 37, has left Royal Blackheath GC to take over the course manager's position at Fulwell Golf Club, Hampton Hill, Middlesex. He takes over from the late Hugh MacGillivray.

■ Work on a full nine-hole, double tee course has started at Rustington Golf Centre, near Littlehampton, West Sussex. The centre, which is close to Ham Manor, already has a nine-hole par 3 course and a 30-bay driving range. Four greenkeepers will look after the site. Head man is 24-year-old Stephen Payne.

■ Bill Sibley has taken over as Sisis Equipment's area representative for Kent, Sussex and Surrey. He is married with a son of three and newborn twin boys.





## Pocket-size guide to pests and diseases is launched

A new all-colour pocket-sized guide to help greenkeepers identify major diseases and pests of fine turf is now available from BIGGA. And thanks to the Association's Education and Development

Fund, which is supported by members of the Golden and Silver Key Circles, it's free.

The guide is designed to be used out on the course in all weathers with each sheet plastic coated. Alternatively it can be incorporated within the GTC training manual. Diseases covered include fusarium patch, anthracnose, take-all patch, fairy rings, thatch fungi, red thread, seedling diseases, and insect pests.

Future guides in the series will cover dry patch and disorders, turfgrass weeds and grass identification.

The first guide was prepared by a BIGGA working group comprising Geoff Yelland of Rigby Taylor Ltd, Gordon Irvine of Mill Ride Golf Club, Mike Drinkall of DowElanco Ltd and Neil Baldwin of Service Chemicals plc.

## Cameron's story

A computer glitch meant that the final paragraphs of our Stockley Park feature last month were missing. Here's a recap of course manager Cameron McMillan's story, including the missing lines, with our apologies.

Then, last June, when Stockley Park opened, the father-to-be moved round the M25 – and was impressed with what he found: the flat landfill site had been turned into a pretty country park with some of the newly-made hills giving excellent views of the City in one direction, Windsor Castle in another and Concorde taking off in another.

Director of golf Peter Oosterhuis, 46, joined Stockley Park in the winter. The site has a lot of potential and he believes he could see 45,000 rounds a year being played there in a few years. But he's unlikely to see any of his customers from the Riviera Country Club. These included Dean Martin, James Garner and Columbo star Peter Falk, whom he once had to tell to play quicker.



## A touch of Florida in Sussex

A 'Florida style' course has opened in Sussex. The Cathedral course at the new Chichester Golf Centre, Hunston, boasts huge rolling greens, big expanses of water, winding streams, trees and enormous bunkers. There are long holes like the 605-yard 5th and spectacular holes like the par 3 15th with a bank of Portland stone behind the green and a small lake in front.

Consultant Jack McMillan MBE, pictured centre, and owner Brian Langmead, far right, joined the greenkeeping team at the opening for this photograph.

## Award-winning Bridie's 'brilliant' time in America

Bridie Redican, the first woman greenkeeper to carry off the coveted Toro-PGA European Tour Student Greenkeeper of the Year Award, has returned to Ireland after her sponsored trip to the USA. And she has joined the newly-formed greenkeeping team at the Adare Golf Club, a new Robert Trent Jones 18-hole design being constructed close to Shannon Airport on the south-west coast.

Recalling her recent experiences in America, Bridie, pictured right, says she was "knocked for six" at the size of US greenkeeping budgets – and greenkeeper's salaries. They're about double what they are here.

Describing her six weeks turf management course studies at the University of Massachusetts as "brilliant", Bridie teamed up with the only other female (an American) attending the residential course "to reduce the odds. There were two of us (women) and over 60 male greenkeepers!"

After completing her studies, Bridie visited the Toro Mower Division's complex at snowbound Minneapolis, before flying to the Californian sunshine.

In addition to touring the Toro Irrigation Division's offices and production lines at Riverside, south of Los Angeles, Bridie spent a day looking over golf courses in Palm Springs.

"The Toro-PGA scholarship

really is the chance of a lifetime – I would urge any young greenkeepers to work hard at their college work to ensure that they are nominated for this year's (October) finals at Aldwark Manor," she said.

Organised by BIGGA, the Student Greenkeeper Award is sponsored by Lely (UK) Ltd, Toro mower distributors and the European office of Toro Irrigation – plus the PGA European Tour.



## EUROPEAN OUTLOOK

### Vigilance needed

Golf has been lumped in with other sports as the Committee for European Normalization tries standardising natural sports surfaces. Of course this is crazy, but fortunately deliberations are going at the sort of pace that would make the slowest golfer look like Harry Weetman.

'Our' man there, Eric Shiel of the Joint Golf Course Committee, says: "A lot of time has been taken up trying to get agreement among different nations on 'standards for test methods', therefore there has been no direct impact on the game of golf so far. But watch must be kept upon these non-golf boffins since, for example, when deciding a test method for 'ball roll' I had to tell them that the Stimpmeter had been used in golf for over 40 years, something they knew nothing about. Otherwise they would have invented something else to be used for all sports."

In addition to ball roll, imminent standard test methods being developed which will impact on golf include: organic matter, particle size, determination of thatch depth, sward height and ground cover, saturated hydraulic conductivity, water infiltration rates and angled ball behaviour. Thankfully it was decided that golf did not need a test method for a vertical ball bounce, so at least that was eliminated.

■ The European Golf Association Ecology Unit management committee, which met for the first time recently in Brussels, is putting together a document detailing the positive environmental attributes of golf courses. The director, David Stubbs of Environmental Golf Services, says it will be for distribution to the golfing community and will serve to counter opposing claims about the environmental impact of the game. A long-term scientific study is also to be undertaken comparing the impact of golf courses before and after construction and/or reconstruction.

The EGAEU is funded by the R&A, the PGA European Tour and the European Golf Association.



# Constructor is given golf course in settlement of six-figure debt

**G**olf course constructor Brian D Pierson has opened his own course. Run by eldest son Mark, Hamptworth Golf and Country Club, on the edge of the New Forest, was given to the Piersons to settle a six-figure debt by the original developers, Hamptworth Park Leisure, who had a 125-year lease on the land.

The Piersons started building the course in 1991, then stopped halfway through when the developers' money ran out. Eighteen months of negotiations later the company which has built more than 180 golf courses worldwide took over the whole project, scaling down the plan for a grandiose clubhouse.

Laid out over 175 acres, running in and out of the 700-acre English Nature-managed Langley Wood, Hamptworth has the potential to become one of the best courses in the south-west.

Newly-appointed head greenkeeper Keith Hill-Jones says he wants to make it the best course in the area in the next couple of years.



Mark Pierson, Robert Key MP and Brian Pierson

Based on a Philip Sanders design, it measures 6,500 yards off the back tees and features several intimidating, tree-lined tee shots, some monster bunkers and a par 5 of 582 yards.

Water hazards are provided by the River Blackwater as it meanders through the course, which was opened last month by Salisbury MP Robert Key. Other hazards are natural too – plenty of trees and hedges and only 19 bunkers.

Greens are built to Jim Arthur specifications. The 9th and 18th holes finish on a double green guarded by a massive bunker which one over-enthusiastic writer described as being "as big as the Isle of Wight".

One of the most daunting holes is the 360-yard 14th which doglegs slightly to the right once you have driven through an avenue of trees that may make even the best players consider using a 4 iron.

Construction of a 6,500 sq ft clubhouse is planned for next year.



Hamptworth's double green – the 9th and 18th

## FLYING DIVOTS

■ If you want to see an Etesia UK Ltd product in action, for example the new RKE pedestrian rotary mower with grass collection, then Spencer Southall is the man to contact. The 24-year-old table tennis champion has been appointed demonstrator for the Ross-on-Wye company. Tel: 0462 490190



■ More than 220 companies are booked in at the Landscape Industries show June 8/9 at the National Agricultural Centre, Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire.

■ The Greenkeeping Supply Company has been set up by Liam Galway. He will be supplying course furniture from Tacit, Pattissons and Standard Golf, as well as clothing and tools. Tel/fax: 0245 248880.

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# Grass seed shortage is on the cards, warns supplier

There could be a shortage of some types of amenity grass seed and a firmer price pattern during the next few months, warns Derek Whelbourn, wholesale director of Johnsons Seeds.

The situation, he claims, has arisen through a combination of factors. "The weather has meant that

this year's spring trade has been later, causing trading over a longer period," he says. "This has helped to clear what initially was an apparent surplus and now replacement stocks of seed are urgently needed for filling empty spaces in merchants' premises."

Additional factors which have contributed to the stock shortage are: considerable exports of seed from Europe to the USA; and lower seed production acreage in Europe and the UK than in previous years.

"The combination of factors has occurred at a time of the year when replacement stocks are not easily available," said Mr Whelbourn. "New crop seed will not be available until the autumn trading is well under way, meaning that the balance of the spring trade and the coming autumn trade will have to be supplied out of current stock. During the late spring and early summer it is almost certain there will be a shortage of certain types of grass seed, leading to an inevitable hardening of prices."

## New courses to open near Gatwick Airport

Two new golf courses are being built near Gatwick Airport. The 18-hole Duxhurst Estate course, on a mature parkland site south of Reigate, is to be laid out as a 6,250-yard par 71 course with comprehensive practice and teaching facilities.

Architect Howard Swan says it will feature modest remodelling of the natural terrain and have some water features on the lower parts of the land. Work began mid-May with full play scheduled for late spring '96.

The Horne Park Golf Academy at nearby Horley, also designed by Swan, is a 2,700-yard nine-hole par 34 course with range, chipping and bunker areas. Continental Landscapes are constructing the academy and ISS are supplying the Toro irrigation equipment. Horne Park is likely to open its doors later this year, with the course in play mid-'95.

## Castle Combe bought

Castle Combe Golf Club in Wiltshire has been bought by the son of a local hotelier. Danny Pecorelli, whose father Guiseppi owns the nearby Manor House Hotel, is believed to have paid £2.5million for the course which cost £8million to build in 1991. Pecorelli plans to run the Peter Alliss/Clive Clark-designed course in the same way as his other club - Mannings Heath in West Sussex where a second 18 holes is under construction.

## FLYING DIVOTS

■ Arcot Hall Golf Club's Ian Duncan, 32, is off to Germany to take over the head greenkeeper's job at Sennelager (British Army) Golf Club.

■ McNab Sports Supplies of Kinross have appointed Neil Mitchell as area representative to cover golf clubs in Fife,



Tayside, Grampian and Highland regions. Neil previously worked for Perth and Kinross District Council as a greenkeeper, looking after golf courses, bowling greens and cricket squares. In 1989 he was awarded the title of Young Groundsman of the Year. Tel: 0577 864198.

■ The Whitbread Group of Hotels, whose golf courses include Forest of Arden, St Pierre, Dalmahoy, Meon Valley, and Tewkesbury Park, has been renamed the Country Club Hotel Group.

## ?Is Yours an Obstacle Course?

### Walker makes Rings Round Other Z.T.R.'s

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