

# Why autumn is always a season to relish

The advent of autumn sees the climax of a number of our major events. Once again the final of the Hayter Challenge Tournament is upon us and this year's final will take us to Pannal Golf Club in Harrogate.

This is rightly regarded as one of North Yorkshire's finest courses and I am sure that those members who have reached the final will enjoy the experience of playing there. How successful the tournament has been again this year. The original concept of this tournament back in 1988 was as a means of establishing an identity for our newly formed regions and to encourage members to think regionally as well as in section and national terms. I believe the formula has worked and continues to do so.

Competition to qualify from section to region to national final is fierce. At the final qualifiers compete for a regional team prize which has perhaps greater significance for team members than the individual prizes. Whilst the tournament is conducted amid much bonhomie and conviviality, the underlying competitive nature of greenkeepers is very much to the fore.

The Hayter team, enthusiastically led by Kim Macfie, is extremely supportive with a keen



## BIGGA in focus

BY NEIL THOMAS

interest in golf and this contributes in no small way to the tournament's ongoing success.

The choice of Pannal Golf Club this year has special significance in that it coincides with the retirement of head greenkeeper, Alan Gamble. We look forward to Alan and his wife, Molly, joining us for the tournament banquet. Many of you will be aware of the contribution Alan has made to the cause of greenkeeper education over many years when he was a member of the Greenkeepers Training Committee. He was also instrumental in the development of greenkeeper training at Askham Bryan College. We wish Alan and Molly a long, healthy and happy retirement.

## Students applauded

At the beginning of October the Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year award climaxes with the national final at Aldwark Manor. This award has grown in significance with the expansion of greenkeeper training in recent years so much so that in 1993 for the first time regional finals were necessary to make selections for the national final. This process has been repeated again this year. Awareness of the award has increased with each passing year and students have a target to aim for which can only encourage their application and determination during their college courses.

The joint support of Toro, Lely UK Ltd and the PGA European Tour in providing three outstanding awards has been instrumental in the success of this scheme. The first prize providing an eight week educational experience in the USA including a college based course represents the opportunity of a lifetime for a student greenkeeper. It is not without significance that the standard of candidacy improves each year in line with the development of greenkeeper training.

Talking to candidates who reach the final and spend two days with us at headquarters, it is clear not only is it an experience which will serve them well for the future but it represents their first real insight of BIGGA's operations at national level and they return home with a much greater appreciation of the aims and aspirations of the Association.

## Ultimate award

At the beginning of December the ICI Professional Products Premier Greenkeeper of the Year award reaches national final stage at our headquarters.

Each year five of our members come through their sections to regional finals and ultimately to the national final. As with the Toro award they return from Aldwark Manor having benefited from the experience.

It is important to recognise that the concept of this award is designed to reward the greenkeeper who has made the most out of the facilities and resources available rather than the one who might have the premier golf

course. This award involves assessments of the candidate's golf course and I feel one of the prime benefits of entering the award is the experience it gives for potential Master Greenkeeper candidates who again will have their golf courses assessed in working towards their certification.

I am aware that some worthy course managers/head greenkeepers are reluctant to enter the award feeling uncomfortable with being assessed by their peer group. They really have nothing to fear – it is a beneficial experience with assessors having a clear brief to base their assessments on the facilities and resources available to the course manager/head greenkeeper. Those who have entered have gained much from the experience and we remain grateful for the continued support the award receives from Roger Mossop and his ICI/Zeneca team.

## BTME on horizon

Finally this month some early thoughts on the BTME '95. It certainly promises to be bigger and better than ever and with a major change in format in that our National Education Conference will be held on the Monday and Tuesday, January 23 and 24.

Our members need to be there in great numbers to support the companies that make the exhibition just what it is – the premier turf management event.

Bring your secretary and chairman of green with you – in many cases it will be an eye-opener for them to see just how fast and progressively the greenkeeping profession is developing.

Our speaker programmes look exciting and varied and I anticipate a greater international presence this time around. The presence of the GCSAA through their president and chief executive officer as well as a stand in the exhibition signifies increasing international recognition of BIGGA.

There still remain many members who have yet to make the pilgrimage to Harrogate. We need your support and there is no doubt that you are missing out on a great experience. Mark the dates in the calendar and I look forward to meeting you at our premier event – BTME '95.

## Membership matters

BY CLARE DOUGLAS

◆ Could you be the BIGGA member who is going to win a £600 prize?

Earlier this year we advertised our grand prize draw for members who recommended two new people for 1994 membership. So far we have 64 names entered in our prize draw.

But there are 140 people who have recommended *one* member. Could you be one of these? If so, you have until September 30 to recommend *one more* person, to qualify for the grand prize draw. This will be made at the BTME in Harrogate, with the winner receiving airfare for two up to the value of £600.

So don't delay – recommend another member today!

◆ Do you have an idea for the new 1995 BIGGA sticker slogan?

Previous slogans include "Golf greenkeepers don't miss out – BIGGA's about!" and "Great golfers need great greenkeepers".

Could you do better than these? If you think you can, send us your ideas and you could win a £15 gift voucher for WH Smith.

We'll send you a voucher if it's your slogan we use for our next batch of stickers. Suggestions to BIGGA, Aldwark Manor, Aldwark, Alne, York YO6 2NF by Monday September 26 please.

