

The times they are a'changing...

Located somewhere in the centre of England, some 200 miles respectively from London and Edinburgh is a country hotel with a surrounding eighteen hole golf course. Known as Aldwark Manor it is not the easiest of places to initially locate although only a few miles north of the great city of York. It was to here that a young organisation known as BIGGA located in May of 1989 from the Sports Turf Research Institute in Bingley, initially to portacabin offices before moving into a converted out-building in December of that year. Since that time both the organisation and the offices have grown. Through prudent conversion, the offices have doubled in size but they are barely adequate for current let alone future needs. BIGGA is presently committed to a lease which expires at the end of 1997. The Board of Management has now established a Buildings Fund to raise monies to provide for suitable alternative accommodation in the years ahead and has signalled its intent with an initial donation of £5,000 from general funds. So the search is on but it will surely be a wasted search unless the Buildings Fund can raise sufficient revenue to make things happen and facilitate a much-needed move. Within the regions and sections of BIGGA there is an appreciation that accommodation needs are becoming acute and now is the time for BIGGA members to become pro-active in their revenue raising activities to ensure that a move becomes a practical option. Members need to spread the word about the Buildings Fund whilst regions and sections need to give priority to fund-raising activities and set targets each year. It will all help and assist in the Association moving purposely forward to the year 2000 and beyond.

BIGGA's computer system has grown piecemeal since the early days at the Sports Turf Research Institute in 1987 and 1988. We followed the STRI in the use of an Apple Macintosh system and it has served us well over the years. However, in the nature of these things it is now outmoded and



BIGGA in focus

BY NEIL THOMAS

simply not fast or flexible enough to meet the growing demands of our burgeoning Association. With this in mind the Board of Management has authorised the purchase of a new Apple Macintosh system which is currently being installed with software programmes being adapted to meet both current and future needs. There will be particular benefits for the Membership Services and Finance sections and it is, of course, vitally important that we stay abreast of current technological developments if we are to provide an increasingly sophisticated service to our members. It has not been possible in the past, particularly on membership matters, to provide the information services we would have liked to regions, sections and individual members. Now our updated equipment will allow this to be done and we will have in place a system to service the Associa-

tion's needs over a five to ten year period.

This will be a productive year for BIGGA's Education and Development Fund and one which confirms the wisdom of the establishment of the fund back in January 1992. No fewer than five projects will come to fruition in the months ahead. Currently available is 'A Practical Guide to Ecological Management of the Golf Course', jointly published by BIGGA and the STRI. Shortly to follow will be a video on golf course preparation. A second video on the reconstruction of a green is not far behind whilst in the pipeline is a booklet on grass identification. Finally the long-awaited localised management training courses are coming to fruition with the first two taking place at Elmwood College in October. These must surely be outstanding value for money at a price to members of just £50 a head. So, another significant year of development and new projects made possible by our golden and silver key supporters, who comprise the seventeen contributing companies within the industry and those individuals who wish to further BIGGA's education and training programmes. To one and all I extend the Association's appreciation.

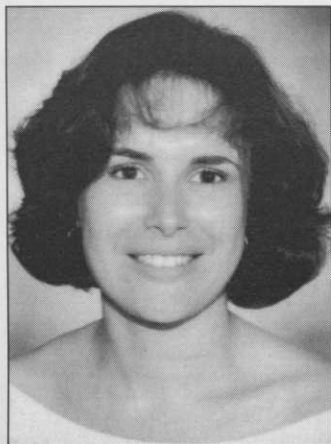
Those of you of a certain vintage will recall folk hero Bob Dylan telling the world that 'The Times They Are A' Changing'. No more so than at Headquarters.

Scott has arrived and is well into his stride with *Greenkeeper International* magazine. Now as I write Sam Flint prepares to leave us with wedding bells beckoning. Sam joined the Association in May 1989, her arrival coinciding with our move to Aldwark Manor. This makes her the second longest serving BIGGA employee and she has seen much water flow under the bridge. Now as the time comes for her to move on we wish her and Alistair every success for the future and thank her for all her efforts on behalf of the Association.

In her place we welcome Vickie Peckham whose past experience with the International Amateur Athletic Federation and the Commonwealth Games Council should stand her in good stead for the world of golf greenkeepers.

A welcome too for our new Membership Services Officer, Janet Adamson, who inherits a current total of 5,676 members which means that last year's final figure of 5,562 has been passed. Janet will have a big job on her hands in both looking after members' interests and taking the lead role in seeking to increase our membership. We wish her well. International members will welcome the news that Janet is fluent in both French and German – we intend utilising her talents! Most certainly times are a'changing in what is a productive and exciting period for BIGGA.

Moving in – and moving on



A BIGGA welcome to Vickie Peckham



...and to Janet Adamson



Wedding bells beckon to Sam Flint