

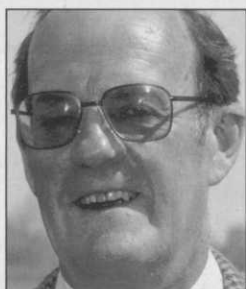
# Comings and goings

It is a pleasure this month to welcome Geoff Hills as our first employee Regional Administrator. Geoff comes from a greenkeeping/secretarial background within golf and is looking forward to the tasks which lie ahead with enthusiasm and an eagerness to get involved. His appointment has resulted directly from an initiative by the South East Regional Board who felt that the time had come when the Association could no longer place the demands of regional administration upon working greenkeepers. To signify their commitment to the new appointment, the South East Region together with its constituent sections ie Kent, Surrey, London, Sussex and East Anglia have agreed to forgo their annual subscription refunds in order to part fund the post. Initially Headquarters will supply any supplementary finance that may be necessary although I know that the Region hopes to independently finance the post in total in due course. One particularly important aspect of the position will be the contact with golf clubs and the greenkeeping staff. This contact will have two prime motives ie to promote the welfare of greenkeepers and to introduce new members to the Association. For the first time a region will have an individual able to devote the time to 'grass roots' contact and I feel sure that there will be



## BIGGA in focus

BY NEIL THOMAS



Geoff Hills: BIGGA's first employee Regional Administrator

resultant benefits for greenkeeper, golf club and indeed the Association. Geoff will have a large territory to cover and overnight results should not be anticipated. However, in the medium/longer terms I expect this appointment to have a significant impact and I know that it has been welcomed throughout the South East Region. I wish Geoff every success.

On the subject of new appointments, Scott MacCallum has now commenced his editorial duties with *Greenkeeper International* magazine. Scott has a strong journalistic golfing background and will now immerse himself in the greenkeeping world. With the change of an editor comes the opportunity to reflect on the quality, content and direction of the magazine. The magazine is very important to the Association and the prime means of contact with our membership. We do therefore need the thoughts of our readers and constructive comments and suggestions are always welcome – no more so than in the current change-over period. Please let Scott have your ideas particularly on future content and direction of the magazine. It is a members magazine and members' voices should be heard. Increasingly we hope that Scott's background and contacts

will enable us to influence a wider audience through both general golfing magazines, press and TV. This is not an easy task as the greenkeeping side of golf is usually far from media minds other than in a crisis – the incessant rain of 1988 during the Open at Lytham comes to mind as does the condition of the golf course for the 1991 Open at Birkdale. Crisis coverage is one thing, educating the golfing public in the importance of greenkeeping and greenkeepers is quite another. It is the latter which we need to tackle with increasing vigour as the vast majority of the golfing public are quite oblivious to the realities of golf course maintenance, to the technical expertise necessary to present golf courses in pristine condition and indeed to the fact that the golf club's most valuable employees are its greenkeeping staff. Part of Scott's brief therefore is to work in this area and he will be looking to members to provide practical assistance where appropriate.

This month I have covered the arrival of two newcomers as BIGGA employees and we look to them to contribute much to BIGGA's future progress and development. As we say hello to Geoff and Scott, it is time to bid farewell to the STRI's Director, Dr Peter Hayes. As Peter fast approaches retirement, I reflect back to BIGGA's beginnings in

1987 at the STRI offices in Bingley. It was Peter who welcomed us there and provided us with our first 'home'. For the 18 months we were based there, Peter and I shared adjoining offices and it was in early conversations with him and such as Jeff Perris and Mike Canaway that I was first imbued with the doctrines of greenkeeping and the vagaries of greenkeepers. How fitting therefore that as Peter leaves the STRI, the relationship of our two bodies has never been closer. We are currently nearing production of 'A Practical Guide to Ecological Management of the Golf Course', detailed below, which has been jointly commissioned by BIGGA and the STRI with the aim being to provide a practical source of information to the practising golf greenkeeper. This will be followed by a booklet dealing with grass identification whilst we are also cooperating on the production of a training video on the reconstruction of a green. These are all exciting projects made possible through the Education and Development Fund and for which the support of the STRI has been essential. So as Peter leaves centre stage I thank him for all his assistance over the past eight years and I suspect that he will remain a busy man. On behalf of members and staff I wish him a happy and healthy retirement.

## Is it worth the risk?

As a result of using BIGGA's Legal Advice Service, a greenkeeper received £15,000 in settlement of a claim arising out of unfair dismissal – available only if you are a paid up BIGGA member. Personal accident cover up to £5,000 is also available only if you are a paid up BIGGA member. Then there's legal advice, accident cover, employment protection – vital in today's world for today's greenkeepers. Thousands of greenkeepers already enjoy the many benefits of BIGGA membership.

Can you really afford not to be a member?

Remember, payment can now also be made by Visa/Access.

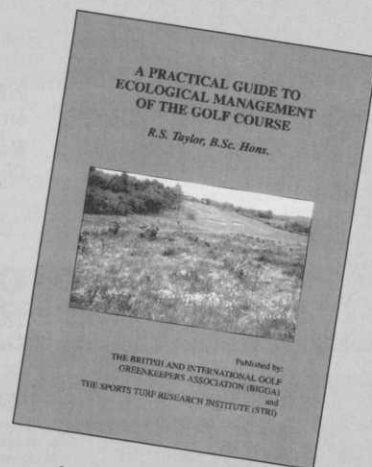
## Ecology book out this month

A new book which will soon prove invaluable to greenkeepers all over the country will be available this month.

'The Practical Guide to Ecological Management of the Golf Course' was written after BIGGA identified the need to assist greenkeepers, golf club officials, especially chairmen of green and anyone interested in ecology of golf courses.

Written by Mr R S Taylor, an STRI ecologist, the 103 page book, illustrated in full colour, was produced with the assistance of Jacobson E-Z Go UK Ltd and the BIGGA Gold and Silver Key members in cooperation with the STRI.

It can be purchased from BIGGA headquarters at a cost



of £3 for BIGGA members and £10 for non BIGGA members.

You can reserve your copy now by telephoning Samantha Flint on 01347 838581.