

Moving forward with the industry

This month I would like to take a look at the turf industry which supports and works with our members in seeking to produce quality golf courses. It remains a small, compact and, in my relatively brief experience, friendly industry. Many greenkeepers come to know and respect those company representatives with whom they deal and much business is born out of a mutual trust and respect. Companies are fiercely competitive but come together for the good of the industry and the greenkeeping profession. The BTME Steering Committee is but one very positive example of companies co-operating and working with the Association for our mutual benefit in the form of an increasingly successful BTME. It is not easy for the Association to always deal equitably with all the many companies with whom it comes into contact but it is not for want of trying.

BIGGA's Education and Development Fund will shortly enter its fifth year and the Association's thanks are due to those loyal supporters of the fund, both companies and individuals. Thirteen companies are now golden key supporters with a further four in the silver key category. This year the fund has already seen the production of a new book on Ecological Management of the Golf Course together with a video on Golf Course Preparation. A further video on the Construction of a Golf Green will shortly be available. The first of our local Management Training courses takes place in Scotland during October with others planned for our other regions as well as Southern Ireland next February and March. Projects for 1996 will be decided shortly. All in all the fund is a success story but in addition to providing education and training benefits for our members it has a cohesive and positive role to play in cementing the Association's relationships with the 17 companies who currently support the fund. Those companies have the opportunity to meet twice a year with the Association and their views are taken on board. Their ideas for utilising the resources of the fund are welcomed. They



BIGGA in focus

BY NEIL THOMAS

receive equal acknowledgement and benefits for their support of the fund while both they and other companies are not precluded from entering into individual sponsorships with the Association. The arrangements have largely worked well, epitomised by the fact that some companies are now in their fourth successive year of fund membership. The fund has therefore been a power for good in bringing the Association and the Industry together for mutual benefit. BIGGA places a high premium on positive, practical and lasting relationships with the companies within the industry.

At a local level the benefits of the education and training available to greenkeepers can be seen in their budget management and choice of products. Today's Course Manager is discerning in the choice of products for his golf course. Old friendships may die hard but the company representative with a suspect product will be given a hard time. So it is my view that, alongside improved training, better products are being made available and the vast majority of business deals are undoubtedly conducted for the benefit of the club's golf course.

Yet, as in other industries, there can be a downside. BIGGA's members are bound by the Association's code of ethics. One of the tenets laid down in this code is that a member will "refrain from encouraging or accepting considerations of any value which might be deemed an inducement to find favour for a particular party or influence decisions in relation to that party and at all

times avoid any exploitation of my Association, Industry or Profession". I am sometimes asked how often cases are brought to my attention which violate this code and the answer is few and far between. This is not an attempt to bury my head in the sand for shady dealing can and does occur. Unfortunately when the waters are muddied those prepared to put their head above the parapet and come forward with evidence are noticeable only by their absence. Suspicion is one thing, proof is another. Those of our members proven guilty of such conduct have no place within BIGGA or within greenkeeping at large. Equally BIGGA would need to examine its relationship with any company proven guilty of offering such inducements. I would like to think that such dealings have a diminishing role to play within our industry and I would welcome a debate on the subject through the columns of this magazine. Where there are undesirable practices those working within the profession and the

industry can combine to stamp them out. Again where golf clubs have proven cases they would benefit both the Association and the Industry in making details available.

Looking ahead, the Association will continue to work purposefully with those companies who support greenkeepers and greenkeeping. Where we can assist companies in the provision of information and advice we will do so. During 1996 we hope to publish a much needed Directory of Resources and we would welcome any suggestions from companies on format and content. Again we would hope that our exhibition and magazine will continue to be a show case for company products and we are always open to suggestions on how both can be improved. It remains my view that a continuing partnership of BIGGA and the Industry is essential if the objective of better constructed and maintained golf courses is to be achieved. Perhaps a case of "united we stand, divided we fall"?

BIGGA CODE OF ETHICS

This Code is established to promote and maintain the highest professional standards of service and conduct among the membership of BIGGA. Through adherence to this Code, members will gain for themselves recognition of individual integrity, responsibility and professionalism whilst enhancing generally the respect and good will for both their profession and Association. As a member of the British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association, I accept this Code and pledge myself to:

1. Set standards of personal conduct which will enhance the stature of the profession of golf course management.
2. At all times carry out my duties and responsibilities in such a manner as to reflect favourably on the profession and Association.
3. Seek to use every opportunity to broaden my professional expertise for both self-improvement and the good of the profession.
4. Follow, as a basic tenet, sound business and turf management principles in exercising the responsibilities of my post.
5. Observe the highest standards of personal integrity in my relationship

with fellow greenkeepers as well as other associated individuals and at all times, as far as I am able, assist my fellow greenkeepers as required of me.

6. Pursue job advancement only where vacancies arise and not at the expense of a fellow greenkeeper and abstain from any action, comment or communication not founded on truth which is likely to harm the professional reputation or practice of another greenkeeper.
7. Give endorsements of any kind only upon satisfactory personal experiences of the item identified.
8. Refrain from encouraging or accepting considerations of any value which might be deemed an inducement to find favour for a particular party or influence decisions in relation to that party and at all times avoid any exploitation of my Association, Industry or Profession.
9. Support at every opportunity the Association, its Regions and Sections in seeking to improve the public understanding and recognition of the profession of golf course management.
10. Report to the Association any evidence likely to be in violation of this Code of Ethics.