

Seeking a middle path

For many greenkeepers this has not been a good year. Reports to Headquarters indicate that greenkeepers continue to be hauled before their green committees with the prime accusation being 'the state of the golf course'. There seems to be little regard for the cold days of May and June when the grass was not growing to be followed by a heat-wave which in many cases burnt off what little grass had appeared. That is not to excuse the incompetent, idle greenkeeper but there is increasing concern within the Association at the treatment handed out by green committees often to men of vast experience where wisdom in greenkeeping matters would be difficult to deny. Frequently it seems that those who sit on green committees, professionals from many walks of life, act in an arbitrary and dictatorial manner which is quite alien to how they conduct their own businesses. At the receiving end is the greenkeeper and the result is stress and disillusion.

Greenkeepers are only too well aware, or should be, of the technical and practical expertise needed today to meet the highest standards of course maintenance. They labour under conditions unbeknown to their predecessors of twenty



BIGGA in focus

BY NEIL THOMAS

to thirty years ago with the vast increase of traffic on golf courses and the demand for winter golf. The educational courses and programmes developed through BIGGA and the GTC in recent years have now set in place an educational structure which can accommodate greenkeepers at all levels. Even the mature greenkeeper, without pretensions to attend college, is catered for through the Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) Scheme as a means of recognising the experience of the years. In this day and age greenkeepers can only stand still at their peril. I believe that the great majority of greenkeepers well understand the need to move forward and do seek the support of their clubs to this end. This support is not

always forthcoming and sometimes reluctantly given. Many clubs still need to recognise that the golf course is without doubt their greatest asset and that their most valuable employees are, in fact, their greenkeepers. The educational processes include courses in communication and in this key area there is hope for the future. For surely it is the breakdown in communication which is often the root cause of the greenkeeper's problems with his green committee. Sometimes this breakdown is pre-empted by a failure of the greenkeeper to communicate with the golf club membership. Slowly but surely the quality of the training now provided is reflected in the growing confidence of the greenkeeper to communicate with the membership, initially in one-to-one situations and through judicious use of the club's notice-board. Equally there is increasing evidence of the enlightened golf club allowing its Course Manager/Head Greenkeeper to address meetings of the general membership regarding the maintenance of the golf course and his role within the club.

Some Course Managers/Head Greenkeepers stand accused of lack of management expertise, and this after many years service. One is moved to ask exactly what has been going on during those years. If the employee concerned has stood still why has the club allowed that to happen? If the employee has sought to enhance his expertise has the club offered assistance towards his training and if not, why not? More often than not in these situations there are two sides to the argument and there needs to be a meeting of minds and compromise. I am not seeking to defend those who fail to meet acceptable standards. It is my belief, however, that even in this day and age most greenkeepers, by the very nature of their calling, remain industrious and concerned, as a matter of professional pride, to present their

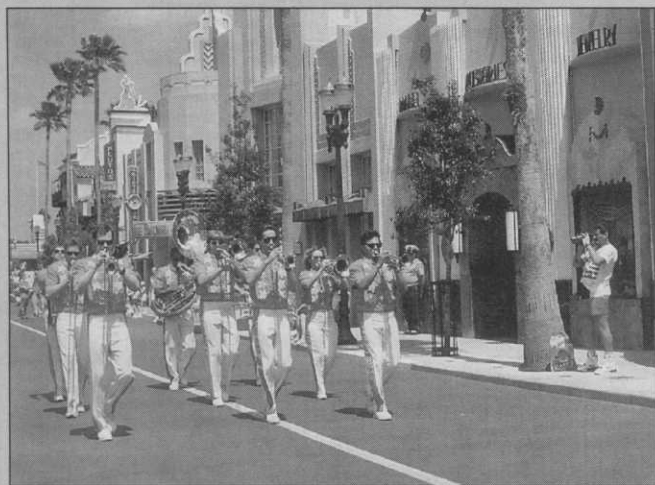
golf courses to the best possible standard. They can be frustrated by lack of resources and equally by the reluctance of clubs to budget for and support their training needs. Some clubs even object to their employees joining BIGGA as their professional association. Such restrictions are unnecessary and indeed clearly not in a golf club's interests. The enhancement of knowledge must ultimately lead to higher standards of greenkeeping, better-maintained golf courses and the plaudits of the members. I'm sure that green committees do not enjoy having members complaining any more than greenkeepers enjoy incurring the wrath of green committees. There has to be a better way of running the show.

My plea therefore is for better communication, cooperation and understanding. Unemployed greenkeepers represent the worst possible scenario – most certainly for the individuals and equally certainly for the golf clubs who have to find successors who may or may not be more competent than the individuals being replaced. Whatever the rights and wrongs of dismissals in the current year, it reflects no credit on the game of golf and there has to be a better way forward. It lies in education and training, in conciliation rather than confrontation and in an ability for those vested with green committee responsibilities to take the broad rather than narrow view in understanding the pressures under which the modern greenkeeper has to operate as well as respecting his ever-increasing skills and knowledge.

The **BEST** piece of
ADVICE I ever received



George Brown,
Course Manager at
Turnberry:
"Learn to eat
humble pie. You
often have to do
something that you don't
really want to do."



Travel with BIGGA to the GCSAA
Conference and Show in Orlando,
February 1996 See Page 9

French seminar puts you in picture

Packages are available to attend the International Exhibition for Maintenance and Upkeep of Golf Courses in Orleans, France, on November 18-20.

The packages which include three nights bed and breakfast at the Novotel Hotel in Orleans, lunch on Saturday, Sunday and Monday, buffet dinner on Friday and gala dinners with entertainment on Saturday and Sunday nights and entrance to the exhibitions, entrance to the lectures and all transfers from the hotel to the exhibiton and restaurants costs 1760

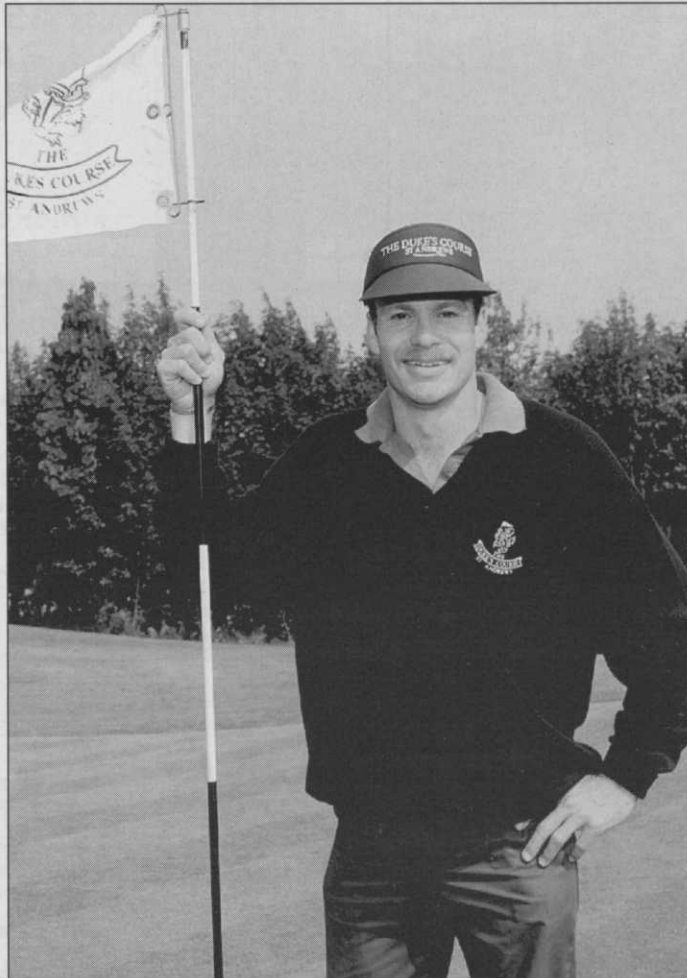
French francs (approximately £220) another 600 francs for a single room. A simultaneous translation of the lectures in English will be made if there are sufficient non-French participants. Otherwise transcripts will be provided.

Lectures include "Weed control of summer grasses" by agronomist JM Calderon-Rodriguez; "Time Management" by a speaker from the Business European Centre; "Irrigation Water Quality" by course designer Didier Comte; "Speed of the Greens" by agronomist Abdo Badra and "Safety, European Norms (material, phytosanitary products, users" by Christian Pisseau, of the National course in Paris.

Less formal events include a golf tournament at Bordes GC, a rugby match in Orleans and the gala dinners which are a "Mexican" evening and a "French Cancan" evening.

For further information contact M. Jean-Luc Duclos Tel: 00 331 3475 8790 Fax: 00 331 3475 8789.

NEWS



Owen's now in charge of the Duke's Course

Owen Browne, Head Greenkeeper at the new Duke's Course in St Andrews - pictured - has been promoted to Course Manager.

Originally from Melbourne in Australia Owen was originally employed by Greenmaw (UK) as one of the construction team working on the course and specifically involved in the construction of the greens, tees and bunkers as well as the installation of the irrigation system.

He was promoted to Head Greenkeeper in November '93 and was involved in the interviewing

and directing of staff and the establishment and maintenance of all turf and landscape areas.

In his new position Owen's duties will also include the ongoing maintenance and continued growing in of the new par-72 course and ensuring that the playing conditions laid down by course designer Peter Thomson are adhered to.

His Royal Highness the Duke of York attended the opening of the courses just prior to The Open Championship at St Andrews in July.

FLYING DIVOTS

■ Nigel Tyler has been appointed Technical Sales Representative to the Amenity Division of County Crops Ltd. He was previously employed by Rufford Top Dress Supplies Ltd.

■ Geoff Walley has been appointed Head Greenkeeper at the new Mobberley GC. near Manchester.

■ Tony Dunstan, Course Manager at Mill Hill GC, Barnet, London has achieved his TDLB D32 and D33 assessor award at Oakland College, St Albans.

■ Club Car has signed a deal to continue as the official golf car supplier to the PGA until the year 2001, the PGA's centenary.

The new agreement is for 10 Club Cars for use by the PGA's seven regions and national headquarter's field staff at pro-ams and tournaments.

■ The first edition of the Golf Owners Operators and Developers Directory has just been launched. It is aimed at giving a comprehensive list of all suppliers to the golf industry. It carries the names of 549 companies and classifies the services and products which they offer under 241 different headings.

It can be purchased direct from the publishers, Golf Business Communications Ltd, 5/7 High St, Dorchester-on-thames, Oxfordshire OX10 7HH for £15 inclusive of postage. For further information call 01865 341580.

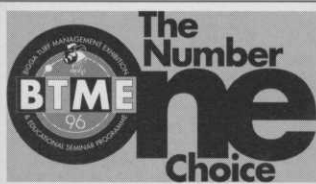
■ In August's issue we stated that Mike Ardley, was the Head Greenkeeper at Braintree Golf Club. The Head Greenkeeper at Braintree is, fact, Kevan Sharpe who has been with the club for 17 years. Apologies for any embarrassment caused by the error.

The BEST piece of ADVICE I ever received



David Walden, Greenkeeper of the Year. Thorpe Wood and Orton Meadows in Peterborough:

"Always try and better yourself. Never stand still and never think you've done learning."



Working for the good of the fine turf industry

The second part of our prize competition is on Page 29



Education Update

BY KEN RICHARDSON

A further reminder for those greenkeepers considering attending this year's supervisory and management courses, at Aldwark Manor and Elmwood College, next year's supervisory and management courses in Ireland, the Midlands, the North, the South East and the South West, information on the BIGGA library and an update on the Massey Ferguson Machinery Workshops.

BIGGA SUPERVISORY AND MANAGEMENT COURSES

Applications for this year's BIGGA Supervisory and Management Courses continue to come in. The courses, which proved to be very popular last year, provide greenkeepers with important supervisory and management skills. Be sure to reserve your place by returning the card in this magazine, together with a cheque for £117.50 to BIGGA HQ at Aldwark Manor. Head Greenkeepers who have not received any formal supervisory or management training should advise their clubs that grants of £150 may be available from the GTC to help with the cost of sending their greenkeepers on one or more GTC endorsed management courses.

The 1995 series of BIGGA Supervisory and Management Courses has been designed not only to meet the underpinning knowledge requirements of S/NVQ Level 3 Units but also to introduce elements S/NVQ Level 4. BIGGA courses are open to all greenkeepers who need to improve their supervisory and management skills. The courses are:

■ **Module 1: Managing People 1.** October 16 – October 20. Cover-

ing team building, interpersonal skills, leadership, time management and computers in greenkeeping.

■ **Module 2: Managing People 2.** October 30 – November 3. Covering assertive communication, influencing skills, grievance and discipline and computers in greenkeeping.

■ **Module 3: Managing Operations and Resources.** November 6- November 10. Covering planning and organising, estimating cost, budgets and project management.

■ **Module 4: Managing Information.** November 13 – November 17. Covering writing memos, letters and reports, communication skills, collecting and recording information.

■ **Module 5: Management Techniques.** November 20 – November 24. Covering level 4 management techniques. Topics include maintenance and improvement of service and operations, project management, negotiation skills and quality assurance.

All course delegates and employers will receive an end of course summary. This could be used to provide evidence for N/SVQ assessors.

Attendance at each year's course qualifies for eight credits towards the Master Greenkeeper Certificate.

The cost per week, including accommodation, all meals and tuition fees is £420+VAT for BIGGA members and £475+VAT for BIGGA non-members.

If you need advice on which week to attend or have any other queries call me on 01347 838581.

Send your application NOW.

Regional Supervisory and Management Courses

Places on the Scottish Region two – day supervisory and management course are still available. These residential courses, which will be held on October 16/17 and October 18/19, have been introduced to make management training more accessible to all BIGGA members. Each course costs £50 for BIGGA members and £150 to non-members. Reserve your place by sending a deposit of £10 to BIGGA HQ.

The Northern Region courses will be held during the week commencing February 12, in Cheshire and in Yorkshire, the Midland Region and the South Eastern Region in the week commencing February 5, three two day courses in the South West Region in the week commencing February 19 and 1 two day course in Killarney, Southern Ireland, in the week commencing March 4.

BIGGA Library

Books and videos have been flowing in and out of the BIGGA library at a steady rate. New titles added recently include:

- Essentials of Health and Safety at Work*
- Pesticide Regulation Handbook – A Guide for Users*
- Work Equipment – Guidance on Regulations*
- Guide to the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and dangerous Occurrences*
- Management of Health and Safety at Work*
- First Aid At Work*
- General COSHH ACOP, Carcin-*

gens ACOP and Biological Agents Workplace Health Safety and Welfare

Storage of Approved Pesticides: Guidance for Farmers and Others

Our Health and Safety Policy Step by Step Guide to COSHH Assessment

Business Accounting
Golf Course Putting Green Construction Guidelines
Fertiliser for Turf
Sands for Sports Turf Construction and Maintenance

Full library lists can be obtained from Regional Administrators or from BIGGA HQ.

Massey Ferguson Machinery Workshops

Plans are being finalised for the series of three Massey Ferguson Machinery Workshops.

They will be held during March/April 1996 at Elmwood College, Oaklands College and at a location in the Midlands. The programme, covering all aspects of tractor use and maintenance, will last for four days. Each college will be asked to nominate up to two students and Massey Ferguson/BIGGA will select 12 students to attend each workshop.

The cost of training, travel and accommodation will all be met by Massey Ferguson.

The **BEST** piece of **ADVICE** I ever received



Walter Woods, Links Superintendent at St Andrews: "Hard work and learning is a great combination."

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AD REF 264

GREENKEEPER INTERNATIONAL September 1995

entry forms for the competitions contact Dave Wells - 01702 522202. Dennis Smith is hoping to organise a coach to the Cromer meeting departing from Southend then moving up through the region. Anyone interested should contact Dennis (Parker Hart).

Finally if you are thinking of playing in a competition beyond the East Anglia section take note. Always make sure you have a national or a BIGGA handicap. A young greenkeeper from our section competed in the National Tournament at St Annes Old Links and produced a storming final round, including a hole-in-one, to win the major prize. Or he would have done had he had an official handicap. Unfortunately he was playing off an unofficial handicap given to him by one of his former bosses two years ago and the organisers had no option but to disqualify him. He did, however, win a prize and a bottle of whisky for his "Nearest the Pin" hole-in-one so he was able to drown his sorrows. The three cards, and excellent they were too, he completed were also sent on to our competition secretary so he will have a BIGGA handicap for next time.

Stephen Millard

Kent

I mentioned last month that the Birchwood Park golf day would be on September 25. This is wrong. The correct date is Wednesday September 27. We have the tee booked from 8.30am then again from 2.30pm with dinner being served from 7.30pm onwards. Steve Johnstone will have to confirm numbers two weeks prior to the day so it is important that you all return your booking slips along with all money as soon as possible. I have also been informed that Birchwood's Head Greenkeeper Neil Carter is moving on and that his number two Mark Drake is taking over. Congratulations and good luck to both of them.

Prompted by an inquiry from Tenterden GC the Kent section has decided to organise a one day First Aid Course. These have been very successful in the past so prompt booking will be advisable once all the details have been sorted out. We have also decided to try and organise a day trip to France which will include a round of golf, dinner and either ferry or rail crossing. If you are possibly interested please let me know.

Richard Page

Removing barriers to help potential golfers

I have just read with interest your piece "Small is beautiful" and agree entirely with the content.

The article asks "So where can the young and, indeed, the old learn the game" and also quotes: "There is nowhere in this country where a beginner can feel comfortable and have all the facilities available to become handicapped golfers."

- Well now there is!

Since opening a 24 bay golf driving range in 1992, we became aware of a gap in the market that was not being catered for, and we have addressed this problem with our new nine hole Academy course which opened last month. Designed specifically as a short course by Martin Hawtree of golf course architects Hawtree, and with greens constructed to USGA specifications to allow play year round, it is, we believe, the first course of its kind in Britain - not necessarily in construction terms, but in concept.

We are committed to removing the barriers in front of prospective golfers, whether young, old, male or female. What we offer is Golf for All - somewhere for all the family to play, but this is not your average Pitch & Putt either as we attract many club golfers and professionals.

The site and indeed the course is small - built on only seven acres) but our investment in this development is not. Architect designed and supervised throughout construction by a reputable contractor, fully drained and with full greens irrigation all that is missing is yardage or fairway. We have two full time greens staff looking after the course and what we lose in quantity we aim to gain in quality.

This is a new and alternative concept in golf in the United Kingdom

David Moss

Proprietor

Adlington Golf Centre
Macclesfield

Feet on the ground

Regarding the article on "Ditching the relics of the past - say Americans" in the July issue you asked, do you feel the title "greenkeeper" is insufficient for today's responsibilities? To some extent this is true. But let's not get carried away with the notion that everything in the garden is rosy. A lot of this thinking comes from the colleges which fill students' heads with thoughts of big pays, fancy titles and big budgets. Well for most of us it is not like that. There are many greenkeepers in Britain - approximately 10,000 - and out of these how many earn more than the average wage? Not many.

Let me finish by saying that BIGGA has made big strides, as has greenkeeping. But let's not get carried away with ourselves. Golf clubs dictate to us what our wages and conditions are. So we can call ourselves Course Managers, Head Greenkeepers... whatever we like but in reality we have a long way to go before the word "greenkeeper" will be obscured from Britain's golf courses.

Duncan Peddie
Head Greenkeeper
Alloa GC

Oz connections

I am working on Pinehurst No 2 course through a programme organised by Ohio University. I used to work as a demonstrator/sales rep for Andrews of Sunningdale, then Gibbs of Bedford, selling Ransomes and Kubota around the London area.

While working on the course a few weeks ago I met a group of Australian superintendents who were doing a tour of the States.

John P. Odell, Superintendent of Royal Sidney GC told me that Gary Miller, who used to work at

Stoke Poges GC in Bucks was killed in a boating accident at the beginning of 1995. John wondered if anyone knew him back in England.

He was also interested in organising an England/Australian Superintendent Exchange Holiday.

If you are interested or could help in any way contact the Australian equivalent of BIGGA or John P. Odell himself at Kent Rd, Rose Bay, NSW 2029. Fax: 02 371 5024.

Peter Morrison
Pinehurst, North Carolina, USA

Vote of thanks

On behalf of everybody at St Andrews Links, I would like to thank all the BIGGA members for their valuable contribution to the 1995 Open. Their presence provided confidence with the knowledge that support would be available in any circumstance.

On a personal note, I was very proud to be part of an association which has progressed in such a dramatic fashion over the years and is such a credit to the Board Members and staff.

Walter Woods
St Andrews Links Supervisor

The **BEST** piece of
ADVICE I ever received



Duncan McGilvray,
Course Manager at
Letchworth GC:
"You can't
succeed as a
manager if you
don't create an atmosphere
in which people wish to
motivate themselves."

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

It is not morbid to think about making a Will. Let us face it we none of us live forever, and unless there is a Will what we leave goes in accordance with the law under what are called the "Intestacy Rules".

Most people think that everything will automatically go to their wife or husband as the case may be. To quote the old song "It ain't necessarily so". Property in joint names will usually go to the survivor, but if the property is in just one name its value is taken into account in assessing how much goes to the surviving spouse, which in fact is limited to £125,000 plus your personal bits and pieces ("personal chattels" the law calls them) and after that some goes to children and some is in trust for the surviving spouse. If there are no children, the survivor gets £200,000 and a share in anything over the rest of which is divided between various relatives.

Even with a small estate is far better to have a Will, if only because you then have proof of what it is that the deceased wanted, and of course you have the deceased's choice of executors (the people who actually have to carry out the wishes), and not in accordance with arbitrary arrangements of law.

It is also important to remember that in the eyes of the law a relative is not a relative at all unless they are a blood relative. Your stepchild does not count, nor do the children of your spouse's brothers or sisters. Furthermore nowadays more and more people tend to live together without getting married and as the law stands not a surviving partner is unlikely to be able to obtain any provision even by going to Court. This may be altered soon, but it would still involve a Court case and it would be so much easier just to make a Will.

How do I make a Will?

There is no mystique about it. All a Will has to do is to set out what it is you wish to be done with your estate. You do not have to itemise each and every item (except in so far as you wish to leave a particular item to somebody) and providing the wording



is clear there need be no formality. A Will was admitted to probate which merely said "All to Mother" and this was valid. There was a slight difficulty, however, because being a Yorkshireman he called his wife "Mother" and the Court finally had to decide whether he had meant to leave everything to his Mother or Wife! The point is that even such a vague Will as that will be accepted by the Courts who will do their best to make sense of it.

Except in the case of servicemen a Will has to be in writing and has to have two independent witnesses. The witnesses can be married to each other, and indeed can be anybody in the world other than people who are mentioned in the Will or their spouse. The only legal rule is that a witness cannot be blind, mad or drunk! the Will-maker and the

two witnesses should all sign on the same occasion and no one should leave the room until all three signatures are complete and on the Will.

There are various companies which do publish Will forms and these, in general, are very good. Before you fill one in just stop and think what you want to do, who you want to appoint as executor, and whether there are any special ideas for your funeral. If there are, then do tell your executors. It is only in Hollywood films that they have an official "reading" of the Will and ideally the executor should open the Will to see what it says immediately on learning of the death. I recall a very sad case when a family opened the Will after the funeral to find that the first words were "I wish my body to be cremated" and they had just come back from

burying her! It was very traumatic and although it ended well by having the body exhumed and then cremated it was a very gruelling experience for everybody.

I would just put in one word or caution. If there are children under 18 involved do get the Will professionally drawn. The intricacies of Trust Law are not suitable for the DIY Lawyer!

In order to deal with a dead person's estate (unless it is quite small) it is necessary to get a document called a "Grant of Representation" which is issued by a Probate Registry which is, in fact, a branch of the Courts. The way of applying for this is quite straightforward and I would invite any BIGGA member who finds his or herself in the position of having to do this to give us a call here at Hambro Legal Protection Ltd when we will be only too happy to act as a guide through the process. It is rarely necessary to involve a solicitor in this part of the business, although once a Probate has been obtained it may be necessary to have a solicitor to deal with the actual conveyancing of the property.

If you do have any problems regarding Wills, intestacy or anything else of this nature please do not hesitate to telephone us. It is one of the benefits you have by virtue of your BIGGA membership

■ In the event of a member having any legal problem then it is extremely important that Hambro Legal Protection Ltd be contacted without delay. Hambro Legal Protection Ltd's telephone number is 01206 867775 and the service is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

The **BEST** piece of
ADVICE I ever received



Terry Farkin, Head Greenkeeper at Dartmouth Golf and Country Club:
"Believe in your own judgement

rather than listen to everyone else. Dartmouth is a new course and everyone likes to give an opinion but you've got to go on your own instinct."