

## As I see it...

BY DEAN CLEAVER  
BIGGA CHAIRMAN

This has been a busy month for me involving trips to Switzerland, Scotland and France. It just hasn't slowed down since my year began and I've enjoyed so much wonderful hospitality I've put on half a stone since January!

My trip to Switzerland was to represent FEGGA at the International Greenkeepers Association Conference in Interlachen. The IGA consists of German, Swiss and Austrian greenkeepers and it is possible that the Association will be wound up with the members putting their support behind FEGGA.

It was a wonderful trip and I was able to visit Gstaad, the exclusive ski resort, and also went up in the cable car which featured in the fight seen in the James Bond film *On her Majesty's Secret Service*. Some of the views were just unbelievable.

The downside of being in Switzerland was that I missed the Toro/PGA European Tour Student Greenkeeper of the Year final and I must thank Pat Murphy for standing in for me. Congratulations to all the finalists and, in particular, Fintan Brennan who won the title. One of my assistants, Noel Greene was runner-up along with John Bachelor from Mendip Spring GC. I am really proud of Noel and he's quite a celebrity at the golf club at the moment.

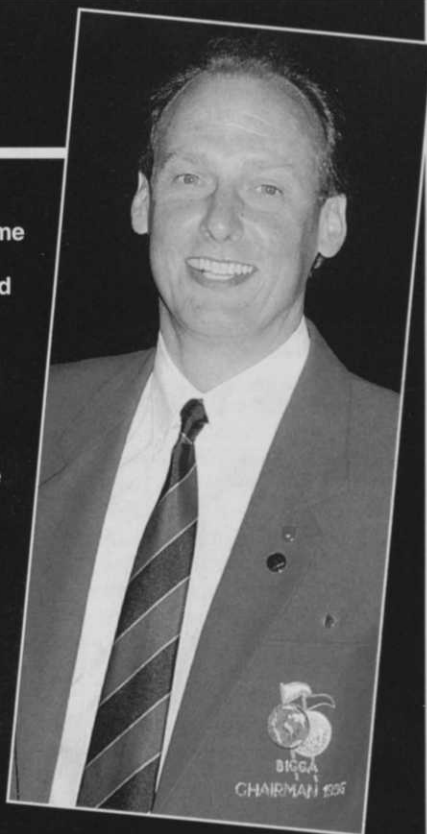
Returning from Switzerland it was straight on to the Midland Seminar where it was nice to take my staff along with me. It would have been good to have seen more people there but those who did attend got quite a bit out of the day.

I also had the chance to attend Scotsturf for a day. It was an excellent exhibition and with spending some time on the BIGGA stand it was a good opportunity to see a lot of old friends again.

The latest FEGGA meeting was held in Bordeaux and although a French air strike caused a few travel problems for some of those attending it was an extremely successful meeting. Everything is moving a lot faster than anyone thought it would and there will be much to report at the Federation's AGM during Harrogate.

I also attended the 10th anniversary dinner of the French Greenkeepers Association held in the function room of the wine Mecca Chateau Lafitte, which was quite an experience... Particularly as everyone complained about the wine! It was red but served chilled and there were even mentions about it in the speeches.

It just remains for me to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a wonderfully prosperous New Year.



# NEWS



The St Catherine's Hospice in Crawley West Sussex benefited to the tune of £1,342.50 thanks to the efforts of the Sussex and Surrey Section members and patrons at the BIGGA Charity Day at Birch Grove.

The companies involved in the day were White Horse Contractors, Watermation, Banks Horticultural Products, Donald Steel and Co Ltd, Colas and CJ Collins

Construction Ltd and the cheque was presented to St Catherine's by Raymond Day, Chairman of Sussex Section. It is hoped that the event will be repeated next year. For the record Surrey won the Inter County Charity Cup.

● Picture shows Ray Day presenting the cheque to Jane Howard, Community Fund Raiser and Susan Town, Fund Raising and Communications Manager.

## SISIS stalwart set to retire after 36 years



The retirement of Arthur Harrison, Sales Director, this month will indeed be the "end of an era" as he is the last person still with SISIS who worked at the original factory in Cheadle, Cheshire.

Arthur joined the company in March 1960 at the start of an important decade for SISIS, seeing the first forays into export. By 1974 SISIS were well established in Europe and Scandinavia and it was time to look further afield. Arthur Harrison elected to go to Japan, Hong Kong and Singapore on a trade mission sponsored by the Manchester Chamber of Commerce. Since that time he has taken a special interest in the company's dealings in the Far East

and Japan is still one of SISIS' major markets.

In his 36 years at SISIS, Arthur has seen many changes, including three factory moves and led the sales team at literally hundreds of exhibitions all over the world.

Even in retirement Arthur has no plans to settle into his armchair. He and his wife Marie have organised the garden to withstand long periods of absence for the various overseas trips they are planning and caravan jaunts in the UK. They will also be able to see more of their three grandchildren.

At the 1996 SALTEX exhibition, a "farewell" dinner party was attended by SISIS export distributors from Hong Kong, Australia, Canada, Sweden, Eire, Northern Ireland, Netherlands, Germany, and USA.



The East Midlands Section has donated £500 towards the BIGGA Building Fund out of Section Funds. It is the second consecutive year that the Section has made a donation to the Fund. Last year it was £300. The picture shows Tim Allard (right), Chairman of the Section, presenting John Pemberton, BIGGA's Administration Manager, with the cheque.

## It's 25 not out for loyal golf course personnel

In modern times 25 years in the same job is quite a rarity and it says much for the loyalty of both employer and employee that it happens at all.

However two golf clubs not too many miles apart have recently celebrated such an anniversary. Lyndon Upham, Course Manager at Gog Magog, just south of Cambridge, and Roy Alderton, Head Greenkeeper at Flempton, just outside Bury St Edmunds, have an unblemished combined 50 years service.

For Lyndon it was a double celebration with he and his wife Denise enjoying their silver wedding anniversary also in 1996.

"There have been many highlights during the 25 years. The most memorable was being introduced to Prince Edward on his visit to the club to present Duke of Edinburgh Awards."

He was presented with a watch by the Club Captain and a Ship's



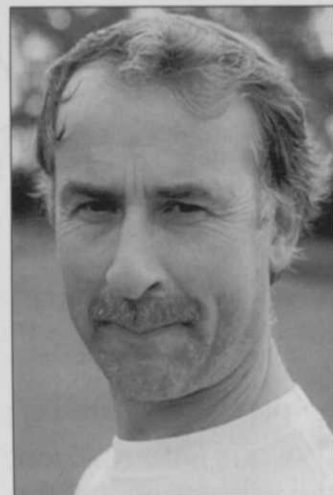
Decanter, on behalf of the staff, by the Chairman of Greens.

Roy arrived at Flempton as First Assistant at the age of 20 and has never regretted moving to the course, which has been described as one of the finest nine hole courses in the country – it boasts 80 pot bunkers.

"The committee will tell me what they want and then let me get on with it in my own time and in the way I wish to do it," he explained.

The Club presented Roy with an inscribed gold watch and a wall clock.

● Pictured above, centre, Lyndon Upham with colleagues of Gog Magog Golf Club



Roy Alderton of Flempton Golf Club

### JUST A THOUGHT

If you work for an organisation that makes its decisions by committee, make sure that you are on the committee.



MERRY CHRISTMAS

Taken from Life's Little Instruction Volume II compiled by H. Jackson Brown, Jr. published by Harper Collins

### BIGGA RECOMMENDED MINIMUM SALARY SCALE 1997

The Association has updated its recommended minimum salary scale in line with the latest Retail Prices Index Figure available which is 2.1% for 1996. The quoted rates apply from 1 January 1997 but any variance from the above RPI figure at the time of implementation should be taken into account. Figures in brackets are 1996 rates.

	18 Holes	27 Holes	36 Holes
Course Manager/Head Greenkeeper	£20,300 (£19,850)	£22,100 (£21,600)	£24,750 (£24,200)
Deputy Course Manager/ Deputy Head Greenkeeper	£14,600 (£14,300)	£15,950 (£15,600)	£17,850 (£17,450)
First Assistant	£12,650 (£12,376)	£12,650 (£12,376)	£12,650 (£12,376)
Assistant Greenkeeper: aged 21 and over	£11,900 (£11,648)	£11,900 (£11,648)	£11,900 (£11,648)
Assistant Greenkeeper: aged 20	£10,413 (£10,192)	£10,413 (£10,192)	£10,413 (£10,192)
Assistant Greenkeeper: aged 19	£8,925 (£8,736)	£8,925 (£8,736)	£8,925 (£8,736)
Assistant Greenkeeper: aged 18	£7,438 (£7,280)	£7,438 (£7,280)	£7,438 (£7,280)
Assistant Greenkeeper: aged 16/17	£5,950 (£5,824)	£5,950 (£5,824)	£5,950 (£5,824)

The First Assistant post is a post designed to recognise a third-in-charge where relevant to the size of the Club. In cases where the First Assistant is the recognised Deputy, the Deputy Course Manager/Deputy Head Greenkeeper salary scale should apply.

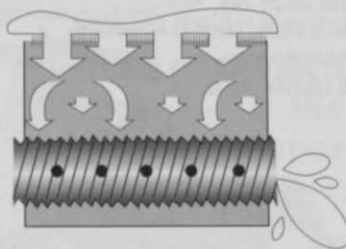
#### Basic conditions of employment should include:

- Overtime where appropriate, to be paid at time and a half, with double time on Sundays and bank holidays.
- Retirement Pension Scheme.
- Time off to attend training courses, demonstrations, BIGGA functions and tournaments.
- Appropriate professional training – fully funded.
- Mileage allowance in respect of club business.

It has been agreed that the Association will form a working party to review the salary scale in general for 1998.

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# Chris calls for support

The following appeared in the **Surrey Herald** and also the **PGA European Tour weekly mailout** which goes to all media and golf associations around the world.

Wentworth Course Superintendent Chris Kennedy has issued a heartfelt plea for Europe's beleaguered greenkeepers to be allowed "more tolerance and understanding".

Kennedy, one of the most respected figures in golf, was

speaking as his hard working team, led by Graham Matheson, made their final preparations on the eve of the Toyota World Match Play Championship.

Wentworth is the only club in Britain who stage two major international events in the same year, and Kennedy knows all too well the fierce media spotlight focused on the famous West Course.

"For us, a major tournament is like facing a very public examination paper and we have to sit it

twice a year," he explained. "I can understand that these days the players are competing for a vast amount of money and prestige and they want everything to be right for them to play. By the same token, however, they must realise that there is no one more upset than the greenkeeper if the course is not in perfect order.

"No-one needs to tell us if our greens aren't right - we live with it 24 hours a day and we eat drink and sleep the job."

Kennedy was reacting to criticisms of European courses that came to a head in the row over conditions for the Volvo German Open at Stuttgart and the One 2 One British Masters at Collingtree Park, in August

"My heart bled for the lads at Collingtree and it was certainly a case of 'there but for the grace of God go we'," he declared.

"Alistair Connall, my opposite number there, had to make a professional decision, and he was just unlucky that all the elements conspired against him. They had staged a successful Seniors event just three weeks before and they wanted to cut the greens down to get the right speed for a European Tour event.

"The minute you cut down to an eighth of an inch or less you are putting the grass plant under great stress, especially when the greens are pure sand based. They were then hit by extreme temperatures in the high 80s and low 90s and the grass just could not recover quickly enough. No one

wants these things to happen, but people have to understand that in this country especially we are at the mercy of the weather.

"Some of the players cite America as having much better and more standardised playing conditions. But they forget how big America is and how they can arrange their calendar to always play where the best conditions are. Even then, with all their sophisticated preparation, things can go wrong as we saw when last year's Ryder Cup was almost wrecked by rain at Rochester.

"The weather in Britain has been much more extreme in recent years. We hardly seem to have a gradual spring or autumn any more. This year we went straight out of a very tough cold winter into almost drought conditions and we had to use three times the normal amount of top dressing to make sure the putting surfaces were right for the Volvo PGA Championship at the end of May.

"At Loch Lomond a few weeks ago one player shot a 66 in the morning but then a fierce wind blew up the loch and the players who went out in the afternoon faced a terrible task. It was no one's fault. It just proved how much nature can affect our sport. In an ideal world we would always like to prepare our courses at the right time of the year and always in benign conditions, but we know real life is not like that."

● Re-printed with kind permission from John Whitbread of the Surrey Herald.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

The winner of the recent **Jacobsen Flash Attach Challenge** is Rob Weaver who is pictured receiving his prizes from Peter Bell, General Manager, Jacobsen E-Z-GO UK.

The Flash Attach Challenge was held to highlight the new quick release, no tools system fitted to the GreensKing V, which allows a cutting unit to be changed in seconds. Rob Weaver who works for Brophy, one of the largest grounds maintenance contractors in the UK, managed a startling time of 15 seconds. He was rewarded with vouchers, a Jacobsen jacket and a commemorative 75 year anniversary baseball cap.



Peter Bell commented "I was very pleased to present Rob Weaver with his prizes and feel that this record breaking time highlights the ease of maintenance on the GreensKing V."

Ronan Rafferty has teamed up with Martin Gillett, an Associate of the British Institute of Golf Course Architects to form Rafferty Gillett a practice which will offer golf course design and architecture, project management and consultancy services as previously provided by Martin Gillett but with the opportunity to commission Ronan Rafferty as a design consultant.

Andy Toomey and John Cook, of Crondon Park, experienced Ryder Cup style pressure when they represented their club in the final stages of the *Mail on Sunday* Golf Club Classic in France.

The two had played excellent golf to help Crondon into the final four at the final played at Champ de Bataille in Normandy and although they lost in the semi final to Hill Valley they were part of the team which clinched third place against Llantrisant & Ponyclun.

## BIGGA SUBSCRIPTION RATES FROM 1 JANUARY 1997

	1997	1996
Course Manager/Head Greenkeeper	£68.00	£67.00
Deputy Course Manager/Deputy Head Greenkeeper	£55.00	£54.00
Greens staff aged 21 years and over	£48.00	£47.00
Greens staff aged 20 years and under	£30.00	£30.00
Full Time Students	£15.00	£15.00
Retired after 31/3/96 (Full benefits maintained)	£25.00	£25.00
Retired pre 31/3/96 (Full benefits maintained)	£15.00	£15.00
(if in receipt of magazine otherwise FOC)		
Retired after 31.3.96 No magazine or benefits	FOC	FOC
Life	FOC	FOC
International	£55.00	£54.00
Associate/Company with magazine	£55.00	£54.00
Associate/Company without magazine	£29.00	£28.00
Unemployed	£20.00	N/A

It has been agreed that the Association will form a working party to review the subscription rates for 1998.

**(mis)adventures of Gordon the Greenkeeper**

This budget was set in 1958 and we didn't hear the greenkeeper moan then!

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