

FROM BLIZZARDS

From blizzards to broken legs... and a lot of fun in between. Outgoing Chairman Barry Heaney remembers his year in office

It is convention to urge those about to tackle a new task to 'break a leg' by way of wishing them luck. BIGGA's outgoing Chairman Barry Heaney waited until the end of his year in office before taking the statement literally.

"I was walking down the driveway outside the house on New Year's Day when I slipped on the ice and crashed. I've broken my leg just above my ankle and have also fractured my shoulder," explained Barry as he recuperated in his home the week before BTME.

The pain in his leg was eased by the memories he has collected in a year in which he has clocked up the miles both home and abroad, dined in the Savoy and met one of golf's true legends.

January

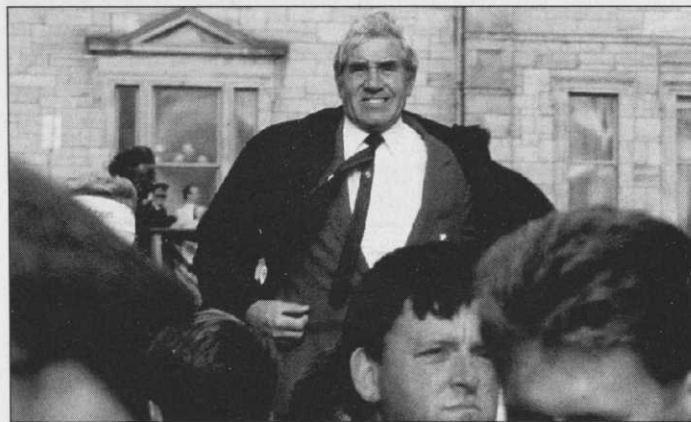
The day I took over as Chairman is one everybody will remember. It started snowing about half past three in the afternoon and by half past four Harrogate was at a standstill. My wife, Joan, left for Harrogate in plenty of time but ended in my hotel room at quarter past eight at night having walked the last mile to the hotel. She was absolutely shattered and furious at having missed me being presented with my Chairman's Jacket.

Harrogate was like a disaster area that night. People were stranded but it was super because everyone pulled together and were helping each other out. Beds were shared, rooms were shared and the hotels were absolutely brilliant bending over backwards, lending out blankets for people.

February

We went to the GCSAA Show in San Francisco. I sat on the International Forum which involved 26 representatives from different countries, representing BIGGA along with Neil Thomas. It was a full three hour session discussing the problems with environment conservation throughout world and the way in which different countries handled it.

San Francisco was breathtaking



On top of the world... well, almost: Barry gets a better view at The Open

and Joan and I enjoyed it tremendously. Debbie Moore, of Agrowe, also took me to Half Moon Bay and Lake Merced courses which were beautiful. When the show was over we went down the Monterey Peninsula and it was very interesting. I am friendly with Charlie Tadge, a Past President of the GCSAA, and his wife Carolyn and he arranged golf course visits for me while Joan had sight seeing trips. It was a marvellous holiday. I travelled down the famous 17 mile drive and had the pleasure of visiting Pebble Beach, Spyglass, Cypress Point, Spanish Bay and several other magnificent courses. It was interesting to see how the other half lives. I played a few holes at Pebble Beach and a full round at Cyprus Point.

It was an experience I'll never forget. On the course there were eight golfers and I counted 16 greenkeepers – and that was the winter team. I watched them hollow coring the greens and top dressing with sand and every bit was worked in by hand by eight men in a line. I've never seen that before.

March

After the excitement of the first two months this was the quiet month for me.

April

Things started to liven up. We interviewed for a new Editor and there was no doubt about the fact that in Scott MacCallum we got a professional Editor who knows something about the game of golf – both sides of it. I've also spoken to greenkeepers in every part of the country about the magazine and they've said how nice it is to have an Editor who wants to talk

and listen to them.

My first visit of the year was to the Central Section in Scotland and the Hayter Qualifier at Aberdeen and Joan and I were invited by Past-Chairman John Crawford. The course for the time of the year was excellent and the weather was wonderful. John does a wonderful job in Scotland and, having just taken on a new job at Stirling, I don't know how he finds the time.

At the end of the month I was invited to a seminar and luncheon by the Agricultural Engineering Association at the Savoy Hotel which was extremely special. I met a lot of old friends there.

Later that day travelled down to Bristol for Westurf. After a mix-up British Rail up-graded me to First Class for the trip down. All that high living!

It was nice to meet up with Gordon and Marion Child who work so hard for the Association as well as past Chairman Ivor Scoones.

I also attended the Golf Course Architects seminar and dinner at Wentworth and grabbed a chance to talk with Chris Kennedy who was preparing for the Volvo PGA Championship.

May

I was invited to the dinner for Peter Hayes retiral as Chief Executive of the STRI. It was nice to see him and wish him well. He has always been a friend to the Association and was the Chairman again this year of the Education Conference at Harrogate.

June

Back down in the smoke for the South East Hayter Qualifier at

Stockley Park. Another very enjoyable day and it gave me an opportunity to meet a lot of lads whom I hadn't met before but a lot of old friends as well. It also allowed me to meet Geoff Hills, our first employed part time Regional Administrator. How refreshing it was to meet such a gentlemen whom you would have thought had been in the job for years. It was a huge blow to the Association when Geoff died so suddenly just after BTME in January and our thoughts go out to his family.

Before too long I was back down south again this time for Southurf. How Geoff Hills managed to handle Southurf after so little time in the job I'll never know but he had definitely done a first class job.

July

At the Northern Hayter Qualifier at Middlesbrough. It was a nice duty to make a presentation to another Past Chairman George Malcolm and thank him for all the work he has done for the Association at all levels.

Then to Erewash Valley for the Midland Region Hayter Qualifier and, this time the chance to play with Kim Macfie. I remember I produced a Barnes Wallis bouncing bomb tee shot off the 1st off the middle of the pond and finished about 100 yards up the fairway. I then won the match by holing a bunker shot on the 16th.

From there to The Open at the Home of Golf, St Andrews. One of the highlights was being invited to the Association of Golf Writers Dinner with Kim Macfie, Bill Lynch and Scott MacCallum. It was extremely enjoyable and I'll remember it for the rest of my life.

On the Wednesday came the highlight for any golfer or greenkeeper – the privilege to make a presentation to Arnold Palmer in front of the clubhouse at St Andrews. I'll treasure the memory for the rest of my life and I feel it was appreciated by Arnold Palmer who made everyone so comfortable.

After The Open it was on to the National Championship at St Annes Old Links. It was dry sunny and very warm all week. It's always a pleasure to meet so many old friends. Unfortunately I picked up a bit of food poisoning and was quite ill for a time.

TO BROKEN LEGS...

August

This was a quiet month. I only had one function in August and that was Northern Section Golf Day at Harrogate. It was nice to be invited and meet up with lads from my own Region.

September

The Saltex Show at Windsor. It was very rewarding. We all worked very hard and it gave me the opportunity to meet Janet Adamson for the first time. I can only say that we are very lucky to have such a Membership Services Officer with so much talent at her fingertips.

On to the Walker Cup at Royal Porthcawl. What an experience! Rain, Pythium, Fusarium, Take All? This argument is still raging but what a wonderful weekend. How refreshing to see our amateurs performing on the same or a higher level than the Americans and to come away with victory was tremendous. The weather had left David Ward, the Course Manger, with major problems but he still produced an excellent golf course. Putting surfaces may not have looked the best but they certainly played well and were appreciated by both sets of players. I also met the Secretary of Royal Porthcawl who was only too pleased for the support of the BIGGA back-up team and praised the Association highly.

West Lincs and the Hayter Final. We had representatives from all five regions as well as the boys from Ireland. What a bunch of lads they were. I don't think I've ever seen Elliott Small as happy as he was when he collected the team prize for Scotland.

Kim Macfie dropped me as a partner but he lived to regret it - I took him to the cleaners!



Presenting the BIGGA trophy for achievement to Arnold Palmer



The Toro/PGA European Tour Student Greenkeeper of the Year presentation

In late September Joan, Neil and myself were invited to the Swedish Conference and Exhibition in Jonkoping and were invited to join an Open Forum with greenkeepers from all the countries of Scandinavia as well as America. What came through very strongly was that they want to take a lead from BIGGA and want to work closely with us. The Swedes are our best friends anyway and Neil has a very good relationship with them.

We were met by Per Olofdjung, President of the SGA and taken to his golf course and that was extremely interesting. He took us to see his sheds and the greenkeeping staff's accommodation was superb. It would do a lot of golf club secretaries and managers good to take a look at the way things are done in Sweden. They look after their staff extremely well and even have a cleaner who comes in once a week to clean out the staff accommodation.

Tommy Lindelof, Chief Executive of the SGA and his wife Helen, picked us on and took us on a sight seeing tour of Stockholm and to have such a guided tour was unbelievable. A visit which Joan and I will treasure forever.

October

We had the Toro Student of the Year Award. Dean Cleaver and Ken Richardson as Education Chairman and Education Officer, do a power of work on this award. It is not an easy task to find a winner such is the quality of candidate today.

I was delighted to be on hand to present the trophy to James Braithwaite who was a very wor-

thy winner.

The Kubota Challenge at The Belfry. Oh dear. This is one which I'd rather forget. I don't think BIGGA came out of it with any flying colours at all. Our lads did their best but it wasn't good enough on the day. It did give me the opportunity on behalf of BIGGA to make a presentation to Brian Hurtle, a great friend to BIGGA, who is retiring. He was the first person to sponsor BIGGA and Kubota are still one of our biggest supporters.

Off to Dublin for the Irish Greenkeepers show where we had a stand. The Irish Greenkeepers Association had just changed their name from Greenkeepers to Golf Course Superintendents and this was worrying to us because we didn't know what would happen to greenkeepers just below Superintendent level. However after a meeting we were given assurances that every class as of greenkeeper would be accepted. This was pleasing and I wished them all the best and offered them any help that BIGGA could give.

November

East Midland's section AGM at Kirby Muxloe and the opportunity to accept a the first cheque for the BIGGA Building Fund. It was very forward thinking of the section and I do hope that other sections will feel able to do the same.

I also was the guest of honour at the Sheffield Union of Golf Clubs Dinner in the Cutlers Hall in Sheffield the Association which was a big thrill for me.

December

The 11th of December was one of

the happiest times of the year for me because we combine our regular Board meeting with our Christmas Dinner and it gives the Board a chance to say thank you to the staff and the Regional Administrators for all the work they have done.

We also made a presentation to Walter Woods, our first Chairman, who has retired from St Andrews. Walter has been a figurehead whom anyone could look up to and say, "Yes that's the chap I'd like to follow and be like." Thank you Walter.

From there over to North Wales Section for their AGM.

I ended the year well but started the new year very badly when on New Year's Day I slipped on my drive and ended up with a "pot" on my leg and a hair line fracture in my shoulder.

■ *It's been a year which I will never forget for the comradeship and friendliness of all greenkeepers everywhere I've been. It was also nice to get to know some of the office staff a little bit better. What I have found that all the staff are so helpful, so friendly, nothing is too much trouble.*

It would be remiss of me not to thank the review body for all the time and work they have put in to bringing this document to final conclusion.

As for 1996 I do think that Dean Cleaver will provide the continuity that is needed for the Association to continue its progress but he has got a more difficult year than I had. The Association has move forward so quickly since 1987 but we now have the address the situation of the office accommodation which is becoming an increasing problem.

The Chairman's job is becoming more time consuming because greenkeepers don't just want to see their Chairman in the magazine, they want to see him at functions on their patch.

I am indebted to Wortley Golf Club for agreeing that I could have all the time I wanted to fulfil my duties and that allowed me to do the year justice. I was determined that I would visit every region and I have been to functions in every region.

Last, but not least, I'd like to thank Joan for all her support throughout the year. She has accompanied me whenever she has been able and organised me so well that I was able to enjoy the year!