

Managing workplace stress

We all use the term stress in our daily conversations and we all know what we mean by it since we recognise the signs and symptoms in ourselves and others. A common definition sees stress as a physiological response to undue pressure brought about when there appears to be a gap between how a person perceives the demands being made on them and how they view their ability to cope.

With the increased demands being made upon managers and their employees to achieve more with fewer resources at a time of unprecedented change, stress is on the increase and greenkeeping is not immune to these pressures.

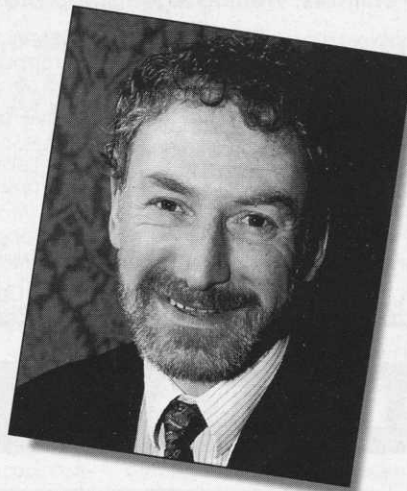
The prospect of increased civil liability claims for stress has been raised following the much publicised case of John Walker verses Northumberland County Council in 1994. This test case set a new legal precedent under which employers may in future be liable under the Health and Safety at Work legislation if employees can prove that they suffered work related illness due to undue occupational stress.

Apart from the prospect of costly litigation, why do employers and management need to take stress management seriously?

The reasons are clear: If occupational stress builds up to unacceptable levels, then employee welfare and productivity will suffer. Surveys undertaken by the HSE and others suggest that the problem is now seen as a major contributor to work-related illness

by **BRIN BENDON**

Brin will be conducting a free session on supervisory management during BTME 96, in the Royal Hall on Thursday January 25 from 1-1.40pm. There's no need to book - just turn up on the day



and sickness absence. Up to 40% of sickness absences may be stress related.

Dr Vernon Coleman estimates that for every employee on the payroll, stress costs about £1,000 per year in lost time due to stress related illness. Stress costs British Industry something like £20 billion a year, making Britain a world leader in the damage that stress does.

How do we account for these trends? Professor Tom Cox suggests that workplace stress is an organisational issue and that employers and managers should consider whether work design and management which result in excessive and unreasonable pressures are posing a risk to health.

The signs of workplace stress can be observed in reduction in output, higher wastage and error rates, weaher planning and control of work, poor motivation and commitment, erratic or poor time-keeping, poor customer service and conflict and tension between colleagues.

Effective stress management can't just cure the symptoms, it has to look at the cause. Change

and uncertainty, lack of clear objectives and inflexible and over-demanding schedules all contribute to occupational stress.

What should our response be? The first step must be to raise awareness of stress as a serious health and safety issue and ensure that practical steps are taken in relation to the day to day planning and organisation of work. We need to raise awareness first because it is something that people are reluctant to discuss. We need to get across the message that it is not wimpish to admit to experiencing stress. Stress is not down to individual susceptibility or weakness.

Finally, we need to invest in management training to prepare Course Managers and Head Greenkeepers for this additional responsibility.

● *Brin Bendon is a Management Training Consultant who has a background in behavioural sciences. He is the director of Vector Training, a training consultant specialising in Human Resource Management and is an approved provider of BIGGA's Supervisory and Management Courses.*

QUIZ



Janet



Sami



Carol



Louise



Bill



Scott



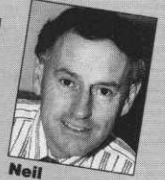
Vickie



John



Ken



Neil



Pauline

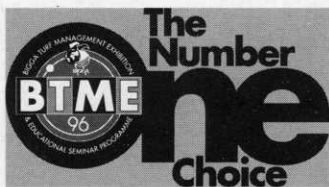
Match up the sporting pursuit to the BIGGA member of staff. There are a couple of bogus pursuits thrown in just to confuse you.

■ Janet Adamson, Sami Collins, Carol Dutton, Louise Lunn, Bill Lynch, Scott MacCallum, Vickie Peckham, John Pemberton, Ken Richardson, Neil Thomas and Pauline Thompson.

Now choose from:

■ Basketball, Football, Swimming, Bungee Jumping, Rowing, Trampolineing, Cricket, Middle Distance Running, Marbles, Shinty, High Jumping, Netball, Cross Country.

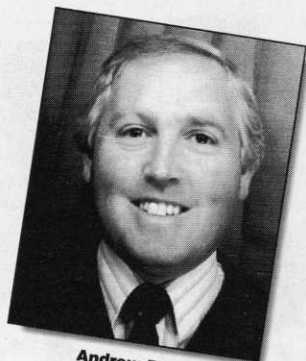
Answers on Page 32.



Working for the good of the fine turf industry



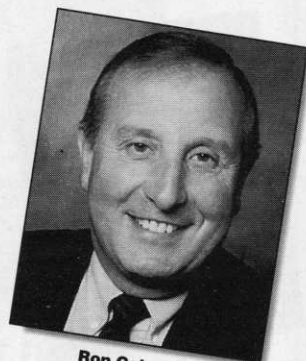
Sue Gudgeon



Andrew Boyd



Gary T Grigg



Ron Coleman

to the Royal Jersey Club, so his title 'Back Down to Earth' may be somewhat misleading. Euan graduated from Leeds University with an honours degree in Sport and Leisure Management but decided that greenkeeping was for him. His choice of career was obviously the correct one judging from his progress so far. Euan will talk about his experiences leading up to, during and after the Student of the Year Competition.

New to Harrogate as speakers are representatives from three of the four Home Golf Unions. First, **Neil Hayward** from the English Golf Union will discuss the Role of the Unions Today. Neil joined the EGU in 1991 and is employed as the Golf Development Course Secretary. His work includes administration on behalf of the Golf Course Committee and he has been responsible for organising a series of workshops for golf club officials. The second speaker in this seminar is **Joe Furlong**, from the Golfing Union of Ireland. Joe retired in 1992, after spending 46 years with the Dublin Port Authority. His involvement with golf began in 1968 when he joined the Royal Tara Golf Club and he has been involved with the GUI since 1975. Joe is well qualified to talk on the Evolution of Greenkeeper Training in Ireland and will discuss how training has changed and will continue to change. The final golf union speaker is **Bob McLaren** from the Scottish Golf Union. Bob has played golf since he was ten years old, has been President of the Scottish Golf Union and is, currently, Chairman of the Greenkeepers Training Committee. Bob has seen many changes in the game of golf and with a 'foot in both camps', he is ideally suited to look at the relationship between greenkeepers, golf clubs and SGU.

Last year's severe drought illustrated all too well, the need to monitor wisely the use of water for irrigation. **Peter White**, runs a water monitoring business in the UK, Portugal and Spain. He measures what is actually happening in the soil, so taking the guess work out of irrigation. Peter will illustrate what can happen, what can be done about it and how things might change in the future.

Lorraine Hatton, from Plan It Training and Consultancy, ably assisted by **Sue Gudgeon** from the GTC, will be looking at the training of greenkeepers. They will aim to show that training is not something just to be completed at the start of a career but should be continued throughout working life. Lorraine is well known to many greenkeepers who have been working towards an assessor award and Sue has been involved with BIGGA, the GTC and assessor training.

If you can't see the wood for the trees then **Andrew Boyd** from Bridlington Golf Club may be able to help. Andrew has been involved with greenkeeping since he was 16 and now manages Bridlington's oldest established golf course. Andrew's talk covers the progress of a tree planting programme at Bridlington, what grants were available, the added value that trees give to his course and he also looks to the future.

How do you put evidence together for presentation to an assessor? What is a portfolio? These are just two of the questions that will be answered during **Brin Bendon's** talk on Portfolio Development. Brin is well known to delegates on BIGGA Supervisory Management Courses, which he has presented for two years at Aldwark Manor.

Brin, a training consultant with Vector Training, is a very experienced trainer, both indoors and outdoors. An enthusiastic hill walker and climber, Brin runs management courses 'out in the hills' as well as in the classroom. Brin will be the tutor on several of the Regional Supervisory Management Courses commencing in February.

Jenny Rolf lectures in psychology at the College of St Mark and St John, which is affiliated to Exeter University. Jenny seems to manage her stress by gardening, interior decorating and walking the hills and coastline of Devon. In her talk, Jenny will attempt to define stress, show you how to recognise it, cope with it and manage your staff so as to reduce it.

Back across the pond for our next speaker, **Gary T Grigg**, President of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America. Gary who is the Superintendent at the Royal Poinciana Golf Club in Naples Florida has been a member of the GCSAA for 24 years and has served on its board for six years. Gary holds Masters Degrees in entomology and agronomy and a bachelors degree in agriculture. Gary's talk will show how the role of the superintendent has expanded through the years and how the GCSAA has developed to meet that change in role, which should be familiar territory to BIGGA members.

Ron Coleman is the Managing Director of Lubrication Engineers in the United Kingdom. He has 30 years experience in the field of lubricants and is therefore well qualified to deliver a talk on how improved lubrication practices can assist in improving efficiency and reduce operating costs.

Stan Zontek's second speech of the week looks at New Trends in Turfgrass Management in the US. Stan, who is the Director of the Greens Section Mid Atlantic Region of the USGA. This time, Stan looks at long and short term trends in turfgrass management including Integrated Pest Management and Best Management Techniques and the trend to make many US golf courses more 'natural' like many in Britain.

Improve your golf course but don't spend too much seems to be the theme of **John Armitage's** talk. John, who is a member of the R&A, chairman of green at Littlestone Golf Course and a director of Green Eagle Golf, who design and build golf courses, seems to have found six techniques which are easy to implement at little cost yet improve the course dramatically.

Our final seminar of 1996 reintroduces **Dr Joe Vargas**. Joe, who is also speaking at the National Education Conference, is Professor of Botany and Plant Pathology at Michigan State University and a well known and respected author. Joe's talk is about Integrated Pest Management and its role in turfgrass management, covering cultural, biological, genetic and chemical pest management as well control methods designed to reduce pesticide use.

Quiz answers	
Janet Adamson	Cross Country
Sami Collins	High Jumping
Carol Dutton	Middle Distance running
Louise Lunn	Trampolineing
Bill Lynch	Basketball
Scott MacCallum	Shinty
Vickie Peckham	Netball
John Pemberton	Rowing
Ken Richardson	Football
Neil Thomas	Cricket
Pauline Thompson	Swimming