

Developing the Regional Administrator's role

It is a pleasure this month to welcome Derek Farrington as BIGGA's Part Time Regional Administrator in the South East Region. Derek is recently retired from his role as Manager of the Surrey County Staff Club which is unique in local government and provides recreational, social and conference facilities for staff of Surrey County Council, Royal Borough of Kingston, Kingston University and Kingston College. Prior to this he had been employed as a Principal Management Services Officer. Derek has settled in Worthing in West Sussex and now sees golf taking over from cricket as his main interest. He is currently a member of Coombe Wood Golf Club, Kingston. I wish him well in his



BIGGA in focus

BY NEIL THOMAS

new role and he will soon become a familiar figure to our South East Region members.

In writing of Derek's appointment, it seems an opportune

moment to reflect on the developing role of the Regional Administrator. Back in 1987 when the regional and section structure was established, the appointment of five Regional Administrators was considered essential in order to ensure the efficacy of administration at regional level. Funding was extremely limited and the call went out for volunteers. These were soon forthcoming and in the intervening years, although personnel have changed from time to time, these posts have proved significant in ensuring the smooth running of the Association. As time went by and the Association was set on a substantial growth curve it became ever clearer that the burden of administration was increasing while the development

of the Association indicated the need for a similar development in the Regional Administrator's role. In recent years it has become apparent that the demands on the Regional Administrator are such that it has now become exceedingly difficult for him to balance the needs of his region against his commitment as a full-time employee of a golf club. The South-East Regional Board was the first to recognise the incompatibility of the respective demands on the Regional Administrator and, after due consideration by the Board of Management, the appointment of the first employee Regional Administrator in a part-time capacity was sanctioned in the South-East Region. Geof Hills was appointed in May of 1995 and following his tragic death in Harrogate in January he is now succeeded by Derek Farrington.

The Midland Regional Board has now set off down the same road as the South-East and an appointment in this Region is now imminent. This is an appropriate opportunity therefore to pay tribute to the excellent work undertaken by Roger Willars in the Midland Region. It has been a pleasure to work with Roger and I know from the many comments I have received from members in the region just how much his services have been appreciated over the years. It has been a job well done.

Just how then does the Association envisage the development of the Regional Administrator's role to meet the present day needs of our members? In a gradual, phased movement to "employee" rather than "volunteer" posts, the Board of Management's philosophy has centred very much on the need to establish lines of communication with all golf clubs in the Regions as well as with Course Managers/Head Greenkeepers and their staff. Allied to this is the need at regional level to implement membership drives to increase the Association's membership. The Regional Administrator will have a clearly defined role in promoting the welfare of the individual member who in turn will be encouraged through his/her section to contact the

New Marketing Manager's mission for the Association

BIGGA's new Sales and Marketing Manager is 32 year-old James McEvoy, who joins the Association from GPT Ltd, the telecommunications company where he was Product Launch Manager. Greenkeeper International put some pertinent questions to him:

What attracted you to BIGGA?

I saw in BIGGA the opportunity to use the marketing skills and experience I have acquired in the rapidly growing telecommunications industry to good effect in another fast growing industry. Also the fact that I am interested in golf and am a member of a golf club (*James plays off 8*) and seeing things from the other side of the game made me extremely interested in this career move.

What are your initial aims?

BIGGA is a highly respected organisation with a well established membership. My initial aim will be to help support the membership and raise the profile of greenkeepers within the golf industry and beyond.

The Association has many



James McEvoy

other relationships within the industry and I will be aiming to continue and nurture these contacts.

How will you achieve that?

I would like to increase the membership numbers using direct marketing techniques and database information to more accurately target our markets.

Anything else?

I'd like to find out exactly what greenkeepers want from BIGGA. I believe that we are here to provide a service and help to represent greenkeepers. It is important therefore that we work as closely together as we can.

What can you see for us in the future?

To help widen our opportunities and improve our profile we must utilise all that technology can offer. This is as true in marketing as it is in greenkeeping.

The Internet and all that it offers is one area that can be explored. Here we can have pages which our members and the industry can tap into providing pages from *Greenkeeper International* and any other useful information.

Tell us a little about yourself

Well, my career background is that I have worked in telecommunications as both an engineer and then marketer for 16 years.

My main interests are sport and food! I've represented Lancashire Schools at cricket and Liverpool schools at football but now prefer the more genteel sport of golf.

Sadly I'm a keen Evertonian which is a little unfortunate on Merseyside - which makes leaving to move to Yorkshire a little easier to bear.