

Does BIGGA need an Essex Section?

Over recent months there has been a great deal of debate about the need for an Essex Section of BIGGA.

It has been proposed that an Essex Section be formed as part of the South East Region and that the revised East Anglia Section be transferred from the South East to the Midlands Region. The proposal has been made purely on the number of current and potential members within geographical boundaries and the benefits of ease of access to Section events that the changes would produce.

A general meeting of interested members has been arranged for Thursday, June 27 at 7pm at Ravenwood Hall, Hotel, Rougham, which is approximately four miles east of Bury St Edmunds off the A14.

The proposal is only viable with sufficient support and members interested in learning more or in having their opinions heard are urged to attend. If the proposal is adopted then there may be vacancies for Section Committee members for both East Anglia and Essex.

Think about the proposed change and talk to your colleagues.

How will it affect you?

Come to the meeting and have a say in how your Association is organised.

Richard Gamble, Head Greenkeeper at Aldwark Manor, home of BIGGA HQ, can be seen on a new piece of machinery

lately after taking possession of a Hayter T93 Greensmower Triple.

"It is a superb machine and I'm absolutely delighted with what we have done with it in the short time it's been here," said Richard.

Richard is pictured aboard the machine in the company of Geoff Platt, Director of Golf at Aldwark Manor and Hamish Macfie of Hayter, who sold the machine.



David brings other industry's skills to new market

The Marketing Department at Hayter has been strengthened by the recent appointment of Marketing Manager, David Briggs, pictured.



David comes from Pifco, where he was the Brand Manager for the Pifco and Tower brands.

He is already becoming heavily involved in Hayter's new product development programme and strategic planning.

Being responsible for both the domestic and professional product ranges, as well as studying for an MBA at The Bradford Management Centre, will ensure a hectic life style for David, who looks forward to the demands of his new role.

Five year nightmare ends at last

A five year campaign of bullying and intimidation came to an end for David Robinson when he was awarded almost £9,000 by an industrial tribunal against his golf club.

David, who until last November was First Assistant at Hallowes Golf Club, at Dronfield in Derbyshire, was the victim of a series of jokes and incidents originating from his dyslexia which culminated in the Head Greenkeeper being formally cautioned by the police for threatening behaviour after he drove a van at David forcing him to jump out of the way.

The tribunal, held in Sheffield, ruled that 33 year-old David had been constructively dismissed because his confidence had been shattered by the harassment he had received and the failure of the golf club to provide a proper and safe system of work which constituted a breach of his confidence and trust in the club.

"The last six months has left a bitter taste in my mouth. It's been a very traumatic experience for, not only myself, but Lynn, my wife, and our eight year-old Thomas," said David, after the tribunal's verdict.

"I feel justice has been done and I've been vindicated. I'm glad that I took the action because although I might not get a job again it might stop someone else having to go through the trauma I've been through."

David's victory owed much to the assistance he received by a lawyer recommended and paid for by Hambro - the legal protection service which comes as part of BIGGA membership.

"There was no way I could have afforded the costs of taking a case like mine to an industrial tribunal," he said.

"Hambro couldn't have been more helpful. I chose the legal firm I wanted and Hambro recommended the lawyer from that firm whom they knew was the employment expert - Peter Meldrum. I must have had 10 meetings with him in preparation for

the case," said David, just as Lynn emerged from the kitchen to say that Peter Meldrum had been on the phone to see how he was.

"In the past many people in similar positions would have had to back off because they wouldn't have been able to pay a lawyer. It allowed me to get better and not worry about how I was going to pay my legal fees if I lost. It took a great deal of stress and strain off the family."

David, who estimates that the cost of the legal support he received was approaching £3500, has advice for other greenkeepers who find themselves in a similar position.

"If they were frightened to go to their Chairman of Green they should go through Hambro and the new enhanced BIGGA scheme brought in this April," recommended David, who benefited from the old scheme which required him to resign before he was eligible for help.

The new scheme means members may be eligible for representation at internal disciplinary hearings and this may prevent the stage where jobs are lost being reached.

David is currently trying to get another job and is not ruling out a return to greenkeeping although he is exploring other avenues as well.

"I've just become qualified as a special needs swimming teacher for the disabled and those with learning difficulties and I'm looking at a career in that. I might also set up my own landscaping business or something else. I'll cross that bridge when I come to it but I'll certainly not sit back. I'm going to rebuild my life," said David, who also stood as a candidate in the recent local



The suffering's over: David and his eight year old son, Thomas

elections.

The driving force behind David's recovery has been Lynn, whom he credits with pulling him through the nightmare.

"Lynn has been great. In November I was at my lowest ebb with the pressure of dealing with the case and the thought that I was going to lose everything was getting too much for me. It was Lynn who made sure I survived and I've come out of it a stronger person."

"We're glad it's all over. It's a chapter closed in our lives and it's time to open another."

David also thanked everyone who helped him. "Lynn, all my family and friends, Hambro, Peter Meldrum, my doctor and my therapist, have all been wonderful."

"I would also like to say that the BIGGA subscription is worth every penny that you pay definitely because you get personal accident cover, legal cover so if anything does happen and you need help it's there."