

# A man



**BIGGA's new National Chairman is the youngest yet but he has all the credentials. He met Scott MacCallum at Gay Hill GC where he is Course Manager.**

BIGGA's new Chairman is, at 38, the youngest to rise to the position in the nine years the Association has been in existence. But what Dean Cleaver lacks in years he more than makes up for in his experience of the industry and the Association and the commitment and enthusiasm he will bring to the job makes him ideally suited to the role.

For despite his "tender years" you could say he's been groomed for job for many years – 21 to be exact.

"I was a committee member of the BGGGA at 17 and Chairman of the Section at 21," he explains. "I've also been Treasurer and Secretary of the Section and have been Chairman of Education for the Midland Region."

"Becoming National Chairman is one of the greatest honours I've had in my career," said Dean, as he sat in the clubhouse of the Gay Hill Golf Club for which he is Course Manager. "Hopefully other young people will look to me as the youngest Chairman and will see that they too can work towards the success of the Association. You don't have to be old to contribute."

## ANNOUNCING OUR NEW REELMASTER 2300-D.





# groomed for the role

"Even in the first few weeks people have said how nice it is to see someone young as Chairman.

"It's quite stimulating and if it helps get more young people coming through it would be a big achievement.

Ironically, the man who launched Dean into a career in greenkeeping was Paddy McCarron, BIGGA National Chairman in 1989.

"I was quite lucky because Paddy pushed me into doing a lot of things in terms of taking responsibility for a job on the golf course and bearing in mind I was only in my teens it was superb experience."

Dean has looked up to Paddy ever since and their paths have taken a remarkably similar path. "When he gave up the job of Section Treasurer it was me who took his place, when I came onto the Regional Board 12 years later it was Paddy's position I took again and when he stepped down as BIGGA representative on the GTC it was me who took his shoes again. Now I have followed him as National Chairman."

The two men still keep in touch and Paddy, who is still at the Leicestershire Golf Club when Dean began his career, is delighted for his protege.

It might have been another career that Dean

was making his name in if things had only been slightly different.

"I had a trial for Leicester City in the early '70s as a left winger but wasn't quite good enough. That was just after Peter Shilton had left the club but when they had players of the quality of Frank Worthington and Keith Weller at Filbert Street."

He continued to play Senior League football in the Leicestershire area but much preferred the atmosphere of the pub team he played for and gave up the serious stuff after a season. He was only in his early 20s.

"I was also a decent athlete and finished second and third in the County Championships at the 100 and 200 metres while I also a decent tennis player. I've never taken my golf seriously although I've been told I could get down to single figures and I have to say that's still an ambition.

"It's just time and I already spend a lot of time at the course in any case and on top of what I do for BIGGA with a young family it's not fair if all my time goes in one direction."

Wife Linda and sons James, 10, and Daniel, 8, have been used to dad devoting so much time to the Association.

"I got married to Linda at 21 just before I became Head Greenkeeper at Rugby GC so

she's always been involved. It's just that it's got more and more.

"I had to do a lot of travelling because Rugby was borderline between Midland and East Midland Sections so in most cases it was at least an hour's travelling and sometimes nearly two hours. But I did it because it was what I wanted to do and I felt I got great benefit from it."

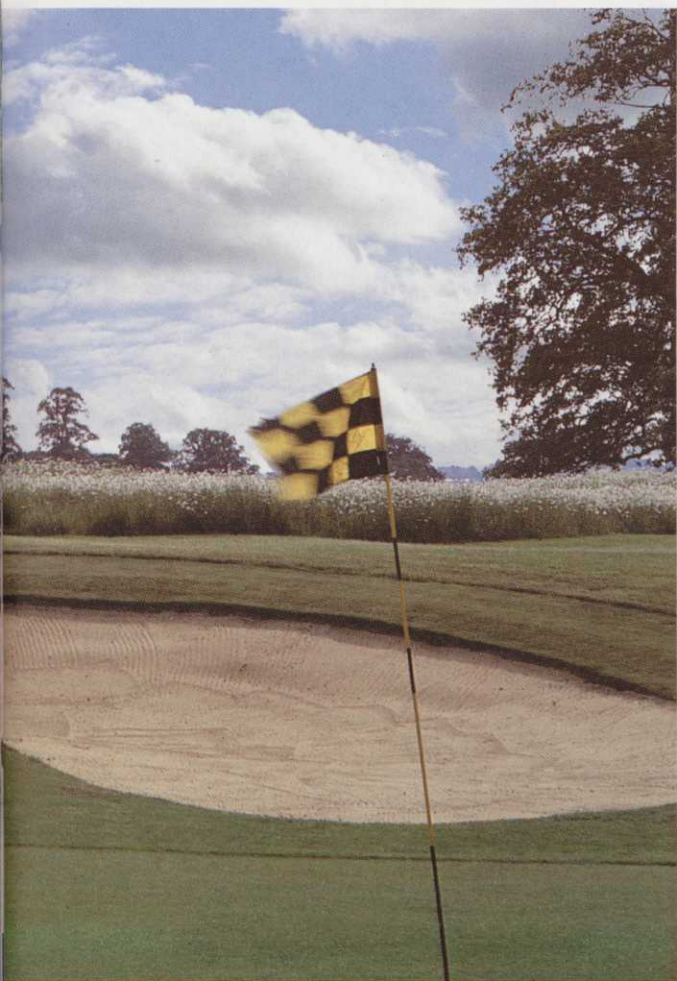
He first joined the Board of Management three years ago and was designated his pet subject of Education as a responsibility and he was Education Sub Committee Chairman for two years. He spent last year as Vice Chairman to Barry Heaney.

"Barry has been a great ambassador and really enjoyed his year. He met so many wonderful people and feels that in a small way feels he's contributed to making the Association better. That's what I want to do."

Dean also enjoys the full support of Gay Hill Golf Club in what will undoubtedly be – and has already been – a demanding year.

"I met with the Captain, the Chairman and Chairman of Green and told them I'd been offered the Chairmanship, that I wanted to do it and what it would involve for the club. I stressed that I wanted them to be a part of it. Their attitude was tremendous. They

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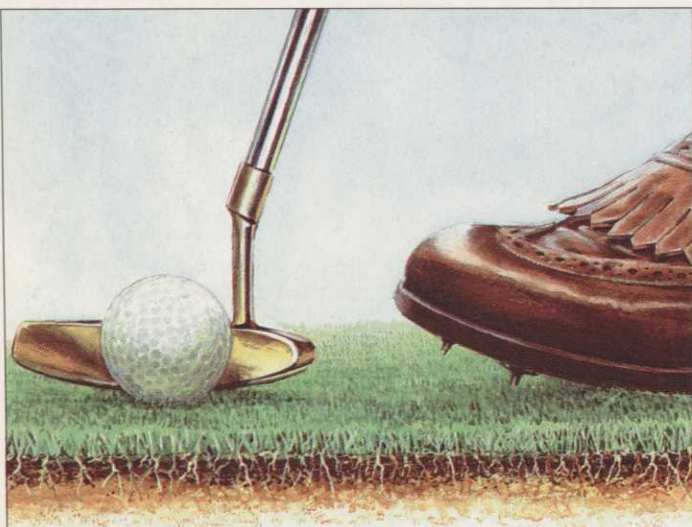
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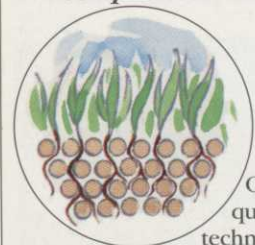




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Over to you: Dean is congratulated on becoming BIGGA Chairman by his predecessor, Barry Heaney

## 'The formation of the European Greenkeepers Association is another important issue'

congratulated me and we sorted out the time it would involve and they've been agreeable to it. I've also been asked a lot of questions by the members about what I will, and have, been doing."

Dean's career took him from his early years under the wing of Paddy McCarron at the Leicestershire Golf Club to Rugby where he spent 10 years, eight and a half of them as Head Greenkeeper - "I went there in the knowledge I would take over when the Head Greenkeeper retired 18 months later."

From there and despite what he describes as "among the best times I've had" he decided on a move and was appointed Head Greenkeeper at Stratford-on-Avon GC.

"I told them I wasn't prepared to start immediately and for a three month period I travelled from Rugby to Stratford one day a week. Rugby were appreciative of that and when I left they presented me with a painting."

He was at Stratford for five years before becoming Course Manager at Gay Hill, a lovely parkland course just south of Birmingham.

Since taking over the Chairmanship at BTME in January he has attended the GCSAA Conference in Orlando and had the opportunity to visit Augusta National for a few hours.

"It was always an ambition of mine to visit Augusta. I know it's caused problems for greenkeepers

with members seeing the immaculate conditions on television but I've collected information on the course and to visit it was just wonderful."

There are a few things in the BIGGA melting pot which Dean feels require addressing in his year in office.

"I think we have to look seriously at the Headquarters accommodation problem. It's not something we'd like to do, it's something we need to do. It's not fair on the people we employ and it does not help the professional image of the Association that we have to work in the conditions we do.

"The formation of the new European Greenkeepers Association is another important issue as it will give us one voice in Europe. If we get this off the ground it will be tremendous because like it or not it's not just about us, it's about Europe. We're an extended family."

An hour in the company of Dean Cleaver and you are left with the feeling that BIGGA is in safe hands and he will hand over the reins in a year's time with the Association in rude health.

"A lot of people have worked hellishly hard to get where we've got in establishing BIGGA including Walter Woods, Jack McMillan and Paddy.

"I know these people are pleased with the direction the Association is going and we mustn't let them down."