

# Heading for Harrogate

As I write Aldwark Manor is assuming an autumnal look and the season of "mists and mellow fruitfulness" is truly upon us once more. For us at Headquarters it signals the build up to major events and by the time you read this month's magazine the eagerly anticipated Hayter International Cup match and Challenge Tournament will have taken place. The final stages of both the Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year and the Miracle Premier Greenkeeper of the Year awards rapidly approach. October will see both the Management Courses at Aldwark Manor and the Regional Supervisory Management Courses in full flow. In the midst of all this activity staff, with increasing intensity, are preparing for our biggest event. The BIGGA Turf Management Exhibition will soon be upon us. For our industry, the BTME lights up the long dark days of winter and in ever-increasing numbers our members head for Harrogate in January to what is now a highlight in the greenkeeping calendar as well as a key week for companies in the industry at the start of another year.

This will be the ninth BTME and it has consistently grown in the years since 1989. For the 1996 exhibition we took on another hall to cater for demand and we continue to work closely with the Harrogate International Centre in looking ahead to our further expansion. Within the next two years a new purpose built hall will come on line on the site of the Royal Hall Car park which will be familiar to those of you who have attended the BTME. As the exhibition continues to grow we will look to utilise this new facility to ensure that the needs of the industry are fulfilled in terms of enhancing the status and appeal of the BTME. In the past there has been much debate on the preferred location of the BTME. In the last year or two it would be true to say that a substantial majority amongst both our members and the exhibiting companies have settled on Harrogate as the preferred location and as such BIGGA is intent on providing an exhibition and educational programme



## BIGGA in focus

BY NEIL THOMAS

which will continue to confirm the BTME as the pre-eminent event within the industry for both members and visitors alike.

For those who have yet to make the pilgrimage to Harrogate there is much in the 1997 programme to attract. For a start there is the town itself, in the past one of Europe's leading spas and with an ambience much appreciated still today. Arrive on Sunday, park your car and you will not need it until you leave on Friday. The International Centre, hotels and restaurants are all closely integrated while, by now, many returning greenkeepers have their own favourite bed and breakfasts and watering-holes! Indeed, a

nice place to visit.

To begin at the beginning there is the National Education Conference. Since its inception at Queens College, Cambridge in 1989, this has become a prestigious educational event being incorporated into the BTME in 1995. A look at the programme will indicate that this year's conference programme will most certainly match the standards of previous years. Complementing the conference is an expanded workshop programme covering key areas for greenkeepers wherein they can enhance their learning and skills.

For the second year, BIGGA will be working with the STRI in running a course for Chairmen of Green and Golf Club Secretaries. It made good sense to set up this course in Harrogate for it is essential that the aforementioned participate in the BTME where they will view the latest products and equipment for their golf courses as well as benefit from the "Learning Experience". Ideally all golf clubs will send not only their Course Manager/Head Greenkeeper but also their Chairman of Green or Secretary. We shall keep working on it!

The BTME seminar programme will run through Wednesday and

Thursday to Friday lunchtime and this year in a new location, the Kings Suite, located below Hall D. It is our belief that this will create a more intimate atmosphere for the programme and enhance the inter-action between speakers and delegates. Certainly, it should be warmer than the wide, open spaces of the Royal Hall. If you throw in the BIGGA Annual General Meeting and the first Annual General Meeting of the newly formed Federation of European Golf Greenkeepers Associations, attendees indeed have a comprehensive programme to look forward to and that is before both the official (and unofficial) social programme.

The Majestic Hotel is BIGGA's Headquarters Hotel and during the course of the year it hosts many events and attracts the country's top entertainers to entertain conference delegates. It is not an exaggeration to say that the BTME banquet has now become one of Harrogate's top social events of the year. The spectacular cabaret planned to climax this year's show should prove no exception with top of the bill Bobby Davro supported by Laine Kennedy and the City Lights Show Band. Make no mistake tickets will as usual be in great demand and places are limited - a case of "don't delay, order today".

So there we have it, a great week in prospect. It has become an international event and delegates are expected in January from far and wide across Europe and further afield. Old friendships will be renewed and new ones forged. Greenkeepers will return to their clubs with fresh enthusiasm, new ideas and conversant with the latest trends and developments in both the profession and industry. For exhibitors the post Christmas inertia will have been swept away and their order books should be filling. Chairmen of Green and Secretaries will surely leave Harrogate with a fresh perspective. If you've been before then most certainly you will be coming back. If this is your first visit it will be both informative and enjoyable. BIGGA looks forward to welcoming you to a memorable week at the BTME.

## Amanda joins the team



The newest member of staff at BIGGA Headquarters is 28 year-old Amanda

Freeman who has joined the Association as Sales and Marketing Assistant.

Amanda, a native of York, arrives at Aldwark Manor from the *Yorkshire Evening Press* where she worked in the advertising department. Prior to that she was a secretary working for, among others, Rentokil.

"I don't play golf but the nearest I've come to being involved in the game until now is when I worked in a guest house near my family home in

Fulford and I used to serve Rodger Davis and Jose Maria Canizares breakfast when they played in the Benson and Hedges International," explains Amanda.

She and her boyfriend Dan, a journalist whom she met while collecting for the Children in Need Appeal two years ago, have just bought a house in York and Amanda is busy designing and doing up old furniture.

"We enjoy camping, walking and mountain biking which I took up when I cycled 12 miles a day to one of my jobs when I couldn't afford the bus fare!"

Amanda joined the Association at the end of August.