

# Gaining an undeserved reputation

It wasn't so many years ago that "the environment" was nothing more than the title given to a Government Minister as a consolation prize when he had set his heart on becoming Home Secretary. And "Ecology", well that would have sat rather nicely on Maureen Lipman's BT "Beattie" adverts. "An 'ology! He tells me he's failed but he's got an 'ology. You get an 'ology and you're a professor!"

It was only ten years ago that I recall a friend of mine, who had returned to Scotland from Germany for a holiday, having to drive for miles to find a garage which sold unleaded petrol so he could refuel. I'd never heard of the stuff!

Nowadays the environment and ecology are not just words in the dictionary, nor merely the hobby horses of vegetarian, 2CV driving Liberals, but part of our everyday existence. Go into any primary school in the country and you are just as likely to have a five year-old come up and discuss the hole in the "O" Zone layer with you than quiz you on who is your favourite Tellytubby... Laa Laa, if anyone's interested.

We are all far more aware and quite rightly so. We have, after all, merely borrowed this planet and will be passing it on to our children and our children's children.

I can't believe that I've just written that, but it does show how ingrained we have become.

During this surge in global awareness golf has often been cast as the villain. As a result, the negative publicity spread by non-golfers who think Jack Nicklaus starred in "The Shining", has put greenkeepers at the sharp end. They have needed to be seen as whiter than white when it has come to the environment.

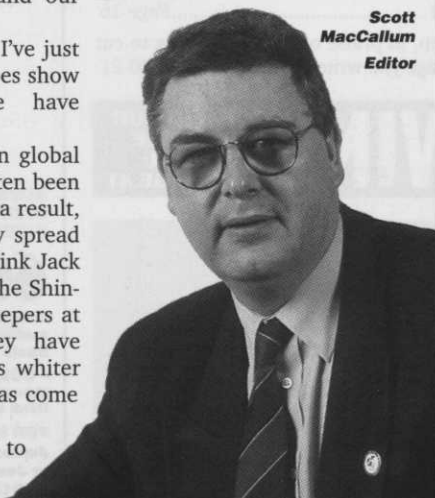
For that reason and to show that, despite

the purely circumstantial arithmetical evidence, golf is not an environmental four letter word, the success of this year's BIGGA Golf Environmental Competition, in association with Rhône Poulenc and Amazone, has been a huge boost to the game as a whole.

The quality of the entries was quite superb and in Hankley Common the competition has a Champion in every sense of the word. If anybody were to doubt golf's commitment to the environment and ecology they should pay Ian McMillan a visit at Hankley Common, where the work which goes on with the full support of the membership would be a real eye opener.

Indeed one of the most useful elements of the competition was the involvement of Dr Keith Duff, English Nature's Chief Scientist, who was one of the judges. He was extremely complimentary about what he found at golf clubs around the country and is an authority to whom many sceptics will listen.

Perhaps through the involvement of a non golfing body like English Nature, in environmental terms, golf will finally shed its reputation as the black sheep of the family.



Scott MacCallum  
Editor

## As I see it...

BY PAT MURPHY  
BIGGA CHAIRMAN

My month started with Board of Management meeting at Aldwark Manor where one of the major decisions taken was the acceptance of the findings of the Standing Committee on Greenkeepers' Salaries and Conditions of Employment. These came about following a series of meetings at which the Secretaries and the Golf Club Owners, as well as Bob McLaren the Chairman of the GTC, were involved.

The structure which is now in place will be useful for anyone who wishes guidance on greenkeepers' salaries.

Also discussed at the Board Meeting was a major new money raising initiative aimed at boosting the new building fund. This will be launched shortly. The identity of next year's Vice Chairman was also revealed. Gordon Child's right hand man is going to be George Brown, of Turnberry. I've known George for some time and I'm delighted that he will be coming in. It's the first time that the new constitution, which allows for someone to be appointed from outside of the current Board, has been put to such a use.

The day after the Board Meeting I had the sad duty of attending the funeral of David Spurden. There were so many there that many of us were unable to get into the crematorium many of them David's colleagues from around the UK, greenkeepers and trade alike, who had made the journey to Scarborough.

That was followed by a trip to Northern Ireland for the IOG Show where I was royally looked after. Allison Sloan fulfilled the promise he made to me at the Hayter Final to buy me my first pint of Irish Guinness while another member of one of the newly formed Northern Irish Section committees Graham Wylie deserves thanks for driving me to the airport.

Other committee men were quick to help Janet, Amanda and I on the BIGGA stand.

Amazingly, on returning, I was able to spend some time at my own golf club. We have two new tees under construction while on the 8th and 9th we hollow cored the greens.

Next up was the Kubota Challenge at The Belfry and a chance to meet up with more friends, including Derek Ganning, and talk with others from the English Golf Union, the Secretaries and the Golf Foundation.

It was an excellent competition as always and congratulations are due to Rene Orban and his team at Kubota for their hospitality. I'd also like to thank The Belfry for giving me a buggy so I could get about in support of the team.

After that I was back to the golf club where I had my annual visit from the STRI and found myself running the clubhouse in addition to my regular duties, as the club steward was on holiday. Holiday? What's that?

