

# A tribute to David Spurden

Everyone can recall the absolute shock they felt on the morning of Sunday, August 31, when they awoke to the news that Diana, Princess of Wales, had been killed in a horrific crash in Paris.

A world went into mourning and the collective outpouring of national grief, as highlighted by 12 hour queues to sign a book of condolence and the funeral itself, will be remembered for the remainder of everyone's lifetime.

However, the vast majority of those who grieved had never met the Princess, but formed their "attachment" from television pictures, the printed word and glossy photographs.

A mere 25 days later the world of greenkeeping suffered an equally shocking and tragic loss. In its way the loss cut deeper because David Spurden, who was killed in a shooting accident out on his beloved Ganton course, was known personally by so many who shared his profession. Not only known but respected and, perhaps most of all, liked as a friend.

Respect came from his wonderful skill and greenkeeping ability – you needed only to look at Ganton to appreciate that – and liked because in an industry known for the genuine nature of so many of its people David had also reached the top of the tree. It is rare to find class acts who can wear both business and personal hats with equal aplomb, but David did just that, and in such an unassuming, down to earth, fashion.

It is perhaps fitting that a week before the accident Ganton played host to the last Hayter Challenge Final and that 63 greenkeepers from all over Britain and Ireland had the opportunity to play David's course. With potential critics aplenty and, in Ganton, a huge

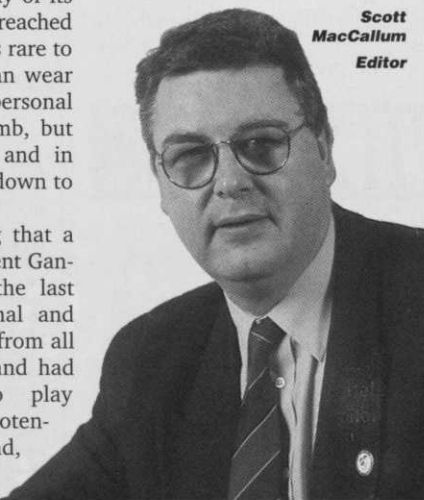
reputation to protect, it would have been a daunting prospect for many, but David was relaxed – he even represented the Northern Region team and played well, especially in the morning.

He knew he had no reason to be anything other than relaxed because, as he no doubt suspected, Ganton was the real star of the week. The praise which flowed for its condition and its layout during both practice and competition days, as well as during the gala dinner, would have caused many a head to swell... but David merely smiled contentedly.

You can ill afford to lose people of the calibre of David Spurden and in an industry as close knit as greenkeeping that loss is even more acute and hard felt.

I pass on heart felt condolences to those who will feel that loss more than most – his team, colleagues and members at Ganton Golf Club, his family and, in particular, his son and daughter of whom I know he was so proud.

That two such remarkable people be lost in such a short space of time is truly a tragedy and for those who knew either of them personally the loss creates a gap in their lives which will never be filled.



Scott MacCallum  
Editor

## As I see it...

BY PAT MURPHY  
BIGGA CHAIRMAN

If I'd known being Chairman was so arduous I'd have gone into training six months before I took over. You literally don't stop and this month has been exceptionally busy.

It started with Saltex at Windsor which, with its Royal connections, was a rather subdued place to be two days after the death of Diana, Princess of Wales. However, it was an excellent show. I judged the stands and

attended a launch of a new greenkeeper's hard hat by Course Care. I wish it every success.

The next week I headed to Northern Ireland, where, following some superb preparatory work by John Pemberton and Janet Adamson, we were able to launch two new Northern Ireland Sections. If the enthusiasm of the meeting is any gauge they will both be successes – see Page 33 for more information.

The three of us took in a North West Section day on our journey home and enjoyed the hospitality of the Section and the company of Ian Holoran and Bert Cross, the Regional Chairman and Vice Chairman, as well as Viscount Whitelaw, who had taken the trouble to attend. I also managed 12 holes of golf.

Arriving at my hotel after midnight I was picked up by the Editor at the crack of dawn the next morning to turn the first sod at the new six hole academy at the Berkshire College of Agriculture. It is an exciting venture and I wish it well.

The next day I travelled with Neil Thomas to Scotland for a surprise presentation to Elliott and Edna Small. They both deserved their tributes and I enjoyed once again being among my "ain folk".

Time to rest? Not likely! Off to the Hayter Final. I did delay my arrival – the first time I've had to do so since becoming Chairman – because of my wedding anniversary on the Wednesday but I got to Ganton on Thursday in time for a few holes with Kim Macfie. I was also delighted to present Kim with a music centre as a token of the Association's appreciation of his support to BIGGA over the last five years.

Surely a break this time? Nope. Off to Stockholm for the Swedish Exhibition, which was absolutely fantastic. I was well looked after by Per Olof Ljung, Tommy Lindelof and his wife, Helen, and enjoyed the finest meal I've had since becoming Chairman. It's an expensive place though!

It was only on returning for Sweden that I learned of the death of David Spurden, a man whose company I had enjoyed just over a week before.

It was the most tragic end to what, for me, had been a successful month.

