

Building work starts soon on Association's new headquarters

BIGGA's goal of owning its own headquarters moved a step nearer reality in December when it signed a 999 year lease on a plot of land at Aldwark Manor.

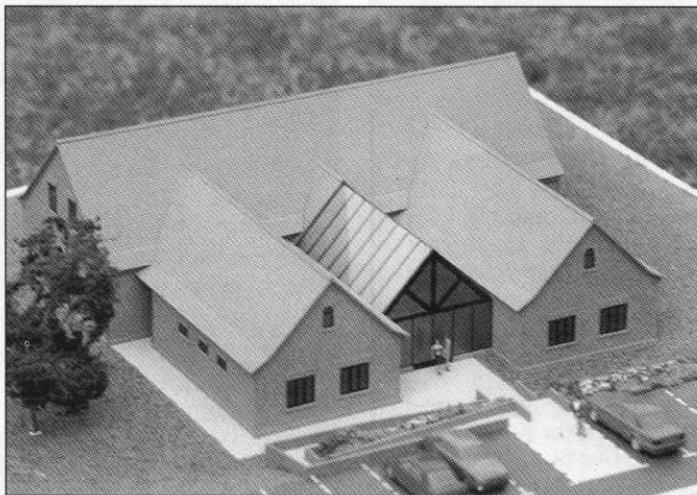
Building is due to start early January with completion expected by August 31.

The purpose designed offices will be sited close to the existing rented building and planning permission has now been granted.

It has not been an easy task to produce a design that met both the Association's requirements and yet satisfied the local planning authority, which was quick to point out that the proposed development lies in a conservation area.

"We have used traditional materials of red facing bricks and plain clay tiles to provide a building which is in a similar traditional style to the existing hotel annexes," explained architect and Project Manager, Stewart Broadhurst.

The building will incorporate a



An architect's model of the smart new BIGGA HQ

board room and training and education facility and utilises a large glazed area to provide maximum natural lighting to most offices and the reception area.

The project is being funded by way of a substantial grant from

the R&A, donations from within the membership and a bank loan. Fund raising events are planned to contribute towards the repayment of the loan and the first of these will be launched at this year's BTME.

Supporters urged to 'buy a brick'

BIGGA has instigated a "Buy a Brick" campaign as part of its initiative to raise funds for its new Headquarters building. As part of this campaign, BIGGA's first fund raising event will take the form of a major raffle to be launched at BTME with the draw taking place during BIGGA's Company Golf Day at Aldwark Manor, on June 22, 1998.

However, this will be a raffle with a difference. In addition to

major prizes, purchasers of tickets will be awarded either bronze, silver or gold lapel badges signifying their support for the "Buy a Brick" campaign. A bronze badge will be awarded for the purchase of £5 worth of tickets whilst purchasing £25 worth will secure a silver badge and £50 worth enables the purchaser to display a gold badge.

"The new Headquarters building will be an important land-

mark in BIGGA's growth and development" said Executive Director, Neil Thomas.

"I feel confident that our members, the industry and the game of golf as a whole will back our fund raising efforts for this major project."

■ Already Harrogate speakers have donated £850 to the fund by accepting bricks in lieu of expenses and forgoing the customary gifts they receive.

Taking steps to avoid EC directives

A Levington Horticulture Conference at Woburn Abbey heard that there was a need to be responsi-

ble in the use of pesticides and other products to ensure that the increasing number of EC Directives do not ban more of them.

The warning came from Bob Daniels, the Research and Development Manager of Levington, who also Chairs a European body of manufacturers which lobbies the appropriate European Community Departments.

He explained that there was currently 55,000 pages of data about products with active ingre-

dients and they were all to be reviewed.

He revealed that Sweden had already banned 250 products and said that already in the UK Roseclear was to be banned as it was an irritant and protective clothing was required before using it.

The conference, which is held every two years included several top Course Managers, agronomists, interested parties and Levington dealers and distributors from around Europe.

FLYING DIVOTS

■ Twelve members of The British Institute of Golf Course Architects paid a recent visit to the Headquarters of the United States Golf Association, at Far Hills, New Jersey. Discussions on technical issues and presentations were given by both groups.

The Architects, not only from the United Kingdom but from the Continent, Iceland in the north to Spain in the south, visited some of the north eastern states' greatest courses including Pine Valley, Shinnecock Hills and Baltusrol.

The visit was part of the Institute's continued Professional Development programme.

■ In early summer, five of the top courses in Britain are going to play host to their Region's greenkeepers. In Scotland the revered links of **Royal Dornoch**

welcomes the Scottish Region on a date to be confirmed. On June 16, **Mere Golf and Country Club** welcomes the Northern Region. **Stoke Poges** opens its doors to the Midlands Region on June 24; **Wilderness GC** hosts the South East Region on June 29 and **St Mellion** starts off the run on behalf of the South West and South Wales Region on June 4.



■ Avoncrop Amenity Products has appointed Nick Johnson (left) as Sales Representative

for the East and West Midlands.

■ Practical Greenkeeping by Jim Arthur is available from BIGGA Headquarters, price £29.95.

The book will also be available at BTME. Anyone who wishes a copy should contact the office at: BIGGA Aldwark Manor, Aldwark, Aine, Nr York, YO6 2NF Tel: 01347 838581 Fax: 01347 838864.

AGM date

The BIGGA Annual General Meeting will take place at the Majestic Hotel, Harrogate at 5.45pm on Wednesday January 21, 1998. All members are urged to attend but membership cards must be produced.

Northern Ireland sections get off to a good start

Nearly 100 greenkeepers and trade from Northern Ireland met at Greenmount College on 1 December for the inaugural Seminar of the new BIGGA Northern Ireland Sections. Speakers included David Garland, Director of the PGA European Tour and Robin Blackford of Hayter Plc. The whole event was sponsored by John Lindsay Professional Sports Turf.

The seminar opened with an overview of safe mowing practices by Robin Blackford. The presentation certainly left listeners in no doubt as to the many potential dangers and accidents which can be caused by short cuts and lack of attention. Philip Baldock, Course Manager at Royal Portrush Golf Club and also Chairman of the new North East Section, followed

this with a look at some of the pests, problems and diseases he has to cope with on his course. It was interesting to note that Phil, as far as possible, avoids the use of pesticides preferring instead organic or natural methods of control. BIGGA's Education and Training Manager then gave an overview of the training offered by BIGGA and colleges throughout the UK for greenkeepers. This led to a lively discussion on the advantages and disadvantages of the NVQ system.

Following a brief repose, David Garland gave an insight into some of the problems of life on the Tour. Using video footage, David looked at a number of challenges to the rules of golf which have occurred in recent years and looked at how



At the inaugural seminar, from left, Phil Baldock, David Garland, Ken Richardson, Graham Wylie and Pat Murphy

the Tour resolved these. The Seminar which was ably chaired by Graham Wylie, Chairman of the South East Section, was concluded by BIGGA's 1997 National Chairman, Pat Murphy, who also presented 12 students from Greenmount College with their NVQ awards and gave the vote of thanks.

The afternoon was successfully rounded off with a buffet provided by the catering staff at Green-

mount College. It is to be hoped that this will be the first of many successful events held by the two sections in Northern Ireland.

Our thanks must go to the sponsor without whom the event would not have been possible, the section committee members who worked hard to achieve the tremendous attendance figure, all the speakers for giving of their time and the staff at Greenmount College.

Impressive line up for conference

The Scottish Region will hold its annual one-day conference in the Dunfermline Conference Centre on March 3.

Each year the Region tries to introduce new and topical subjects relevant to greenkeeping and this year is no exception.

The Region consider themselves fortunate in having Bob

Taylor, ecologist, and Jonathan Smith, wildlife adviser, both from the Scottish Golf Course Wildlife Group, speaking about environmental issues. From Turnberry Hotel and Golf Course, George Brown, Course Manager, will be talking about the work that goes on behind the scenes in preparation for

an Open Championship. Steve Isaac from the STRI will be advising on how to survive winter play. From Cargill PLC, Steve Lucas will be discussing microbacterial populations in golf greens. Finally, Nick Lawson from OCMIS Irrigation will impart his knowledge on irrigation techniques.



New Sales Manager for Johnsons

Adrian Hayler has been appointed National Sales Manager for the professional division of Johnsons Seeds. He will be responsible for the management, development and growth of the agricultural and amenity business sectors, and will look after all UK wide sales activity in these areas.

He brings a lot of industry experience to the new position, previously working for Dalgety Agriculture for nine years and, prior to that, for Seed Innovations and Bartholomews.

"I am delighted with the opportunity to work with one of Europe's leading seed companies. I look forward to meeting customers and ensuring that they get the best service from all our sales team," he said.

Maximum pass marks for the 'fast track' Oaklands students

The pass rate for Oaklands College NVQ Level 2 "Fast Track" greenkeepers was 100%. The concept of the fast track course allows students with industrial experience to obtain NVQ Level 2 in one year. This system differs from traditional methods of training by using a combination of projects, accreditation for prior learning, work based assessment combined within college training.

Students can therefore progress as rapidly as their experience allows. Oaklands feels this means greater motivation for students who already possess a wide range of skills and sound knowledge base.

Missing from the group photo are K. Allen, Hanbury Manor; Neil Robson Harpenden GC and C. Little, South Herts GC.



On the right track: Oaklands College students

Greenkeepers narrowly avoid tragedy as river wreaks havoc

‘When I fell in I just went straight to the bottom. I was fighting for my life. I was taken about 100 yards down the river.’

A routine journey across a causeway linking the King James VI Golf Club to Perth ended in near tragedy for two greenkeepers.

Head Greenkeeper Bruce Somerton and assistant Kenneth O'Donnell were crossing the causeway in a tractor and trailer from the club, which is on an island in the middle of the River Tay, when the powerful current took over.

Bruce, 33, was swept 100 yards downstream and only survived because he was able to free himself from his jacket which was dragging him under. He was eventually tossed onto the bank by a whirlpool. Ken, 27, a non-swimmer, was trapped until police in a rescue boat were able to pull him out.

It was low tide and the 30 yard long causeway was three feet deep in water when the daily crossing was attempted but, when they realised that on this occasion the current was too strong, they tried to reverse. Unfortunately, just as they began to retreat the force of the water knocked the trailer over and the tractor, with Ken still in the cab, was left balancing precariously.

With emergency services on standby on each bank, a police launch was used to rescue Ken. A safety line was attached and an officer climbed onto the top of the trailer and towards the cab. A life jacket was passed to Ken who was then able to climb out of the window and be hauled aboard the launch.

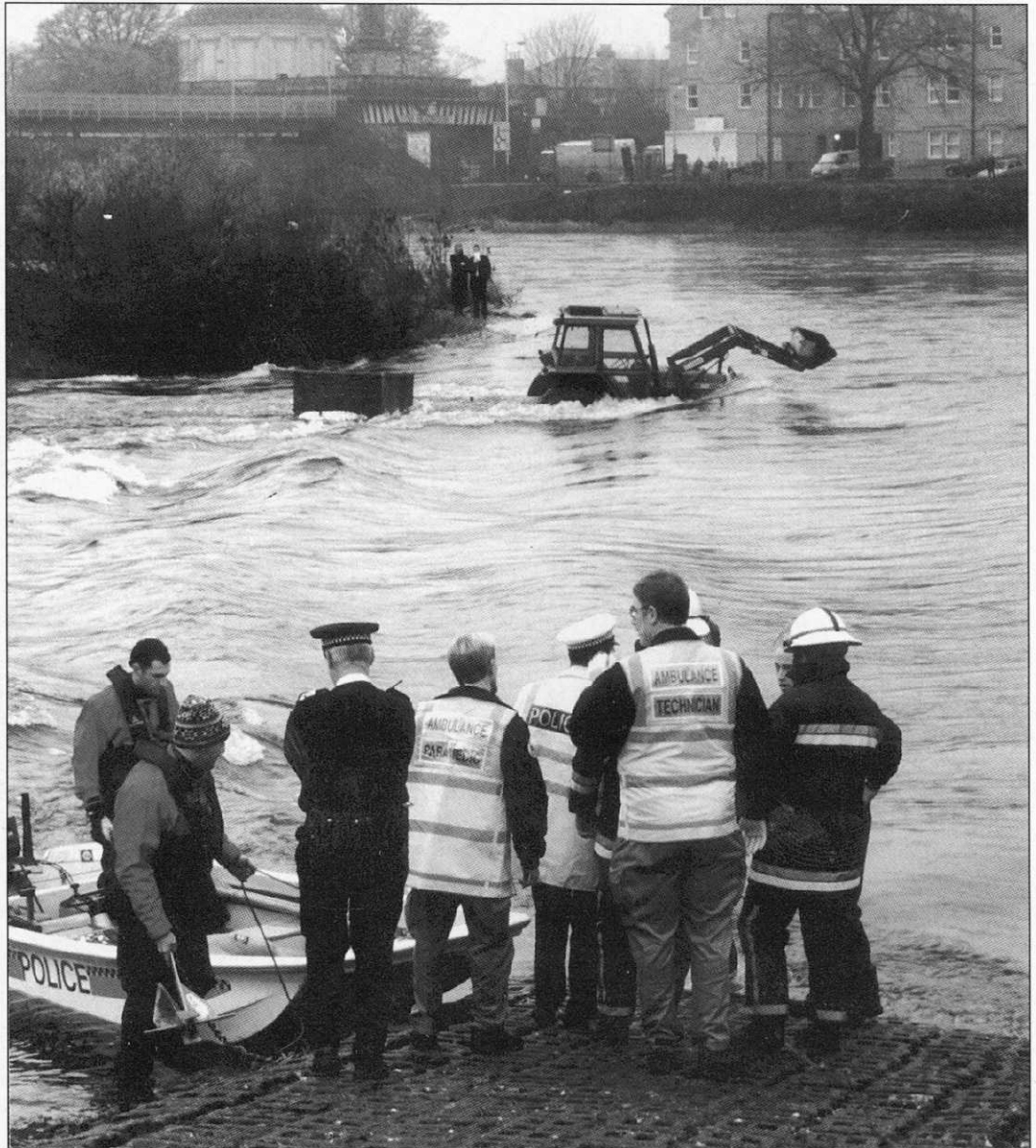
“We were trying to get across but the water was just too powerful and it knocked the trailer over,” said Bruce.

“When I fell in I just went straight to the bottom. I was fighting for my life. I was taken about 100 yards down the river and had to take off my body warmer because it was dragging me down.”

Both men were taken to Perth Royal Infirmary but later released.

The tractor was eventually winched ashore but the trailer, which contained turf cutting machinery, was washed downstream and believed lost.

■ Picture courtesy of DC Thomson and Co Ltd.



Pattison's pledge for new year

Pattison's have relocated to new premises in Chesham, Buckinghamshire, from their original home in Luton, Bedfordshire.

“It is never easy to find the right premises, it is just like finding the right house to move into – somewhere that has the right location and a decent enough building that you enjoy going to every day,” said Mike Hinch, Joint Managing Director.

“Moving the company in the height of the season obviously caused many problems, but when the right premises came up we had to move quickly. I can now say that the company is back on track and stock levels are healthy.”

Pattison's distribute through a successful direct van sales operation and an established dealer network.

“We have worked closely with

our dealers and embarked on a rigid pricing policy to ensure that we can sell our products at the right price whether it is through our own salesman or through a dealer.”

“It has been a tough year for us but we are hoping that the close relationships that we have with the greenkeepers and organisations like BIGGA will ensure the industry moves onwards and upwards.”