



Dear Neil,

I greatly appreciate your writing to me about my husband. It has been extremely comforting for me and my family to receive so many wonderful letters.

I am grateful for your sympathy and perhaps you could convey our thanks to all your members.

Willie was always proud of his association with BIGGA.

Lady Whitelaw, Penrith, Cumbria

### Velvet comments 'unfortunate'

Jim Arthur's comments on the properties of velvet bents (June 1999) are generalisations and unfortunate in their tone. The April article from IGER's forward thinking Danny Thorogood was specifically discussing how far the species has developed since the poor-performing pioneering variety Kingstown.

To say that Avalon is "only an improved strain" of Kingstown is to dismiss all plant breeding successes in creating better turf grasses - of any species - in recent years. Unfortunately, long gone are the days when courses only dealt with a select membership. The golfing boom has led to a huge increase in the pressures put on the course itself. In reaction to this, all courses are now benefiting from the

modern, much improved varieties made available through today's breeding programmes.

Avalon offers significant improvements over previous velvet bents in disease resistance wear tolerance and establishment. Regarding Jim's specific reference to Poa annua competitiveness, Avalon will out-compete Poa as its high shoot density makes it very difficult for weed species to establish.

It may well be that velvet bents are 'not the answer' for every course in the UK, but our advice - backed up by the experience of European and UK greenkeepers - is to try Avalon on one or two greens first and assess its performance.

Simon Taylor  
Director, British Seed Houses

### Is there anybody out there?

As a greenkeeper of more than ten years standing I feel compelled to write to highlight some of the reasons why more and more greenkeepers are leaving this country to work abroad.

I have worked hard to get to the level of Head Greenkeeper, spending a lot of time and money to pass exams to do so.

Having been advised to go for a Head Greenkeeper job at a club that was subsequently found to be in financial difficulties I was made redundant after just eight months.

But I was determined to stay in the profession and applied for a post in the

Republic of Ireland which cost me over £300... for a 20 minute interview.

Since then I have applied for more than ten posts advertised in Greenkeeper International and have had just one reply. A young lad I had training under me in my last job has also applied for lots of jobs and every application letter he wrote has been ignored.

Is this any way to treat had working professionals. No wonder so many are leaving to work abroad and I am seriously considering leaving the profession.

Stuart Lusty, Gloucester

### Honorary Membership thanks

May I express through your columns my gratitude for the Association's invitation to Honorary Membership, for the Chairman's kind visit with his wife and yourself to my home in Woodstock and for the beautifully framed Certificate of Honorary Membership which he presented to me. My wife wants me to say how much she appreciated and is enjoying the bouquet of flowers which Mrs Marion Child gave her.

It was a particular pleasure to receive this distinction from your Chairman,

Gordon Child, whose friendship I have valued for many years and whose work on behalf of the greenkeeping profession I have admired for even longer. I feel confident in a bright future for the Association when I consider how far the Executive and Board have brought the profession in the relatively short time since the 'I' was put in 'BIGGA'; but if they still have any mountains to climb, I am sure that we shall only find them at the top.

Fred Hawtree

### What service!

I - or rather my wife for me - placed an order for some Stylo rain gear on a Monday. It arrived the following Saturday and everything fits like it

should. I'm very happy with the quality, and nothing less than amazed at the service.

Thanks very much and keep up the good work.

Craig Smith, Golfclub Glashofen-Neusass, Germany

# Let's keep it SIMPLE

## You need SPARES ?

*We got*  
**SPARES !**

*You need*  
**SERVICE ?**

*We got*  
**SERVICE !**

*and*

*We got*  
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