

Harry Diamond

1930-1999

Harry Diamond died at Ayr County Hospital at 3am on Wednesday December 8th, 1999 in his 69th year. To write all that Harry has achieved over the years would fill Greenkeeper International for the next few issues. He was, as we say in Scotland, "A man of many parts".

I have known Harry since we were strong young men, both of us being active members of the Scottish and International Golf Greenkeepers Association. His introduction to golf was through caddying as a very young lad. He was born and brought up in Irvine, which is in the very heart of Ayrshire golfing country. He once told me that, except for a few short walks, you could hit a ball from one course to another for five miles down the Ayrshire coast.

When one considers there are 16 top class courses within walking distance of Irvine what could one do but get involved although, in his early days, it was the necessity to bring a few extra shillings into the family purse that took Harry on to a golf course.

Among the many stories he told was of how he caddied for the well known amateur and Walker Cup golfer, Jimmy Walker. Jimmy was not always the smartest of dressers on the course so Harry thought he would tidy him up by starting on his shoes which he polished to a glowing shine. After the match Jimmy blamed Harry for losing him the game. He said that every time he addressed his putt, the glare from the shoes blinded him and he couldn't see the line.

From caddying as a lad it was only a step into greenkeeping where he started as an apprentice at Glasgow Gailes under the Head Greenkeeper, Bert Graham, and the then First Assistant, Ben Moir. There Harry learned the basic art of greenkeeping and, as he said, "How to take care of yourself and, if possible, avoid the golfers".

Harry served his National Service with the Scottish Fusiliers, one of the Scottish Regiments who were formed and recruited in Ayrshire. He was always the athletic type and took part in all sports, in particular, running for his Battalion. After his National Service he returned to Glasgow Gailes where he started to play serious golf. He was involved in



county golf as a boy and played in the Scottish Boys and other local competitions. It was not long before the County saw Harry's ability to win golf matches and at a handicap of one he was often in the Ayrshire County Team.

When it came to Greenkeepers' Competitions, Harry's name appears on most of the Scottish trophies. He might have gone into Professional Golf but as most of us know, the Club Pros in the 50s had a harder time keeping the wolf from the door than even greenkeepers.

He served his time as a greenkeeper and then moved on to Irvine Bogside as Head Greenkeeper, where I know he had happy memories but as we know this does not fill the pot, so Harry took up the Course Manager's position at Ayr Belleisle and Seafield Municipal golf courses

where he stayed for many years until he was asked to take a desk job in Golf Administration for Ayr Council.

This was a prestige position where he had many irons in the fire, not least the ability to assist in Greenkeepers' education. At this time, Ayr Technical College refused to carry on with the education of our Assistants. Harry was instrumental in persuading the Educationalists on the Council and the Youth Employment that a College for Greenkeepers was essential in Ayr when one considers the number of golf courses that fall within the boundaries of Ayr and the number of greenkeeping students requiring theoretical training. It was only sensible that courses to this end were started and financed and the students taught to a Higher national level locally.

Harry served the greenkeepers on

many committees. His record for service in the Ayrshire Section is unequalled, starting back in the SIGGA days right up to the 16th of November when he was on the telephone to me making suggestions of how we could go about helping greenkeepers who had occupational ailments. This was Harry - always thinking about his fellow man.

In recent years, as well as being active in the Ayrshire Section, he was Chairman of the Scottish Regional Board of BIGGA and did three years on the Board of Management as the Scottish Representative where those serving at the time will remember his sound and wise counselling. I know that if we on the Scottish Board gave him a brief it was carried out to the letter.

After retiring Harry was called back to Ayr Council to help finalise the redistribution of work on the Sports Grounds and Golf Courses. He finally wound that up, and was invited out to Malta to straighten out constructional problems they were having with their existing golf course. It ended up with his being the mainstay in putting the whole course into excellent playing condition. For over two years he flew in and out of Malta so many times that he was known as "The Maltese Falcon". I can't recall whether I told him about this alias. If I did he would have laughed for if anyone liked a good story it was Harry. His ready wit and marvellous memory brought tears of laughter to any gathering of friends. He was an avid reader which was obvious from his conversation.

Harry is survived by Jessie, his second wife - they were married in America in the summer of 1998 - his son, Paul, and three daughters, Ann, Linda and Rosemary, and 11 grandchildren, and Jessie's two sons, Kenneth and Allan, who will all find a vacancy in their lives.

The funeral service was held in the Good Shepherd Cathedral, Ayr, thereafter to Masonhill Crematorium. Both services were well attended by friends. It is a mark of respect for Harry that the Crematorium was filled to capacity and standing.

Our thoughts are with the family in their time of mourning.

What can we say except, "Well Done" to a life that touched us all.