

PGA team: A real credit to their Association

Greenkeepers came from Denmark, Scotland, Wales and England to volunteer their services for the Volvo PGA Championship held at The Wentworth Club at the end of May. Their work are much appreciated by the European Tour as by relieving caddies of the bunker raking considerable time is saved on a round, speeding up play to the advantage of all concerned.

They are also a great comfort to Course Manager, Chris Kennedy, who apart from all the worries that he has during a Championship such as this knows that in the event of heavy rain he can call on tremendous support from this team to get the squeegees out and keep play moving by keeping the greens playable.

The Championship in the past has been plagued by such weather and was one of the reasons that the Tour asked the Association if Greenkeeper Support could be made available for all four days this year. Thankfully that was not the case this year and the event was blessed with four days of almost continual sunshine. More volunteers would have been useful over the first two days as there were 52 matches to provide for and it was a great effort by those Greenkeepers who covered two rounds in temperatures around the eighties.

There was a great atmosphere in our little office, nobody being unkind to the Regional Administrator when he gave exhibitions of controlled panic and an even better one, especially on the last day in the hospitality suite overlooking the 18th green generously provided for our use by the Tour, for apart from the Support Team we seemed to 'pick up' lots of Greenkeepers there just for the golf (including Jack and Rita McMillan!) and who managed to talk their way past security.

On a serious side eventual winner Andrew Oldcorn must feel eternally grateful to Rob Boyce, Newmarket, who was the only person to see his ball catch a branch while he was playing out of trees and land near him, still in the trees and finishing up covered in leaves. As Andrew and his caddie walked towards the green Rob called out "Where are you going? The balls here."

Oldcorn then played a great shot on to the green and holed the putt. At least the caddie bought him a



Above: The 2001 Volvo PGA Championship Support Team relaxes with Nick Faldo

Below: The team poses with new Volvo PGA Champion Andrew Oldcorn



drink afterwards but I reckon the two shots that he would have incurred without Rob's help were worth thousands.

The week seemed to run rather smoothly especially with Andrew Oldcorn and Nick Faldo posing for the cameras with the Team. I'm sure that all of the Greenkeepers, including Willy Harder who had made the trip from Denmark to work all four days, will want to return next year, hopefully with a few more volunteers to make those first two days a little easier. A great effort by all concerned.

Finally, the following conversation was overheard between a greenkeeper inside the ropes, who was accompanying the Lady Official marker during one of the days play ...

GK: What Club are you from?

Lady Official: Wentworth

GK: Do you live on the Estate

Lady Official: Yes

GK: You don't live in one of these £3 million houses do you?

Lady Official: No darling. I live in one of these £10 million pound houses!

Derek Farrington

Royal Inverdivot GC...

Strip Cartoonist of the Year www.tonyhusband.co.uk



You may have heard their names mentioned in conversation, or even seen them in print, but have you ever wondered who the individuals are who help BIGGA to run so smoothly as the leading Association in the fine turf industry? Read on...



Jim Paton

BIGGA Board Member for Scotland

Name: Jim Paton

Golf Club: West Kilbride GC

Association Position: Board Member for Scotland

How long have you been a member of BIGGA? Since its inception in 1987.

Where do you hope the Association will be in 10 years time?

Having a greater regional identity with full time Regional Administrators and their own regional offices.

For what would you most like to be remembered?

Being on the board at a very important time in the Association's development - moving into our own offices and taking giant leaps forward generally.

For what would you least like to be remembered?

Some of the pictures Scott has taken of me for the magazine.

Why did you take on a more involved role in the running of the Association?

Being more involved has enabled me to assist in bettering the lot of the greenkeeper.

Name one thing which would improve the Association?

If every greenkeeper joined the Association.

What is your claim to fame (None, not acceptable)?

Former Open Champion Mark Calcavecchia giving me his clubs after a round in the '91 Open at Royal Birkdale. Any offers?

Describe BIGGA in 15 words.

(15ish!) Better greenkeepers through education, Improved golf courses, Gains for members, Great social opportunities, Advances in standards throughout.