



Welcome

THE BEST WAY FORWARD

We're in difficult times at the moment. War is filling our television screens and at home the economy is being forecast as being just on the wrong side of a recession. The impact is being felt at golf clubs up and down the country and several of our finest Course Managers have been called into the office and been told they are to be made redundant with, in some cases, their role to be carried out by a combination of the Chair of Green and the remaining green staff.

The short, medium and long term implications on the condition of these golf courses will be open to debate, while hopefully those excellent Course Managers will not be out of work too long and will soon be back putting their vast experience, knowledge and expertise to good use at an appreciative golf club.

What it has done is produce calls among some quarters for a trade union to look after the best interests of those working in the greenkeeping profession and provide the muscle required to ensure greenkeepers don't lose jobs needlessly.

As you might expect, we at BIGGA, believe that the brand of support with which we provide our members, is the best way of maximising career development and protection.

In addition to the array of training and educational opportunities available, the Association's Legal Helpline and legal representation has kept many greenkeepers in jobs and secured thousands of pounds in damages for those who have been victims of golf clubs which have broken employment law.

As you will see elsewhere in this issue the Association is also currently setting up a Directory of experienced greenkeepers to offer support to colleagues who are coming under pressure at their clubs. Acting as mentors and possibly mediators on greenkeeping and agronomic matters these people will undoubtedly do a lot of behind-the-scenes work and many greenkeepers will remain in post who might otherwise have joined the ranks of the unemployed.

We at BIGGA feel that this is the best way to support our members, together with the close relationships the Association has developed with other golfing bodies including the R&A, the Golf Unions and the Secretaries' and Golf Club Owners' Associations.

One of the difficulties a Union would find in operating within the golf industry is that each golf club is an entity in its own right and negotiating employment rights and pay deals with approximately 2,700 different employers would be difficult. To make an impact, a Union's ultimate sanction of strike action would involve galvanising the support of many greenkeepers who are happy with their lot at golf clubs who look after their staff.

In difficult financial times clubs, like any other business, look to make cuts and the people with the higher salaries in an organisation are usually at greatest risk.

If this is done illegally BIGGA will provide the legal help necessary but if a club has gone through the correct procedures it may be unfair but not illegal and there is little the Association, or a Union, could do to change that.

Scott MacCallum, Editor

SETTING UP A SUPPORT SYSTEM FOR MEMBERS

The Association is currently establishing a Directory of Members who are willing to support fellow greenkeepers when the need arises with advice and guidance from a greenkeeping perspective. This might be when a greenkeeper is experiencing employment difficulties with his club and such advice will be of assistance to back up support received from the Legal Helpline Service. Alternatively, it might be a specific problem on his golf course when a second opinion would be helpful. Members need support for many

reasons and the setting up of this Directory will further assist BIGGA in promoting the welfare of its members.

Those putting their names forward for the Directory can be assured that referral for assistance will be on a geographical basis thereby minimising the time and travel involved for those giving of their services.

If you feel that you can support your fellow greenkeepers in this way, please contact Neil Thomas at BIGGA HOUSE.

TREKKING UP KILIMANJARO

James McCormack, Head Greenkeeper at Kirriemuir GC, will be trekking up Kilimanjaro early next year to raise money for the Anthony Nolan Trust, a registered charity which helps provide bone marrow for patients suffering from leukaemia and other bone marrow diseases. The trust receives no help from the government and relies solely on fundraising.

The trek itself will last for six days, three and a half days to the top of Uhuru peak, a total of 5895m and two and half days of descent.

"This is the first time I have attempted anything like this. I'm not a hill walker but I do plenty of walking at work," he said.

"Climbing Kilimanjaro is described as the experience of a lifetime and it certainly will be that for me," added James.

James is trying to raise around £4,000 and

anyone who would like to sponsor or make a donation should send it to James at Kirriemuir GC, Northmuir, Kirriemuir, DD8 4LN and cheques should be made payable to The Anthony Nolan trust.



NEW FACE AT ROMILEY GOLF CLUB

Damon Beverley has been appointed as new Head Greenkeeper of Romiley Golf.

Damon (2nd from right) heads a young, highly qualified and enthusiastic greenkeeping team at Romiley.

He started his career at Holdsworth Golf Club followed by two years service at Stamford Golf Club. He joined the greenkeeping staff at Romiley in 1998 and is delighted to be currently involved in new tee construction at the 7th and 9th holes. The new drainage system, costing over £100,000, has provided Romiley members with excellent all year round golf conditions and is constantly being improved and upgraded.

Michael Moore [1st left] has been appointed as First Assistant and Chris Harrison, Chairman of Greens Committee,

commenting on the appointments of Damon and Michael said that they were well deserved and the Romiley greenkeeping team were fully committed to improving the quality and presentation of the course for members and visitors to the club.



BIGGA GOLF DAY

Anyone who wishes to enter a team in the annual BIGGA Golf Day, which this year is being held on Monday, June 23, should contact Sarah Sowerby at BIGGA HOUSE Tel: 01347 833800 by May 1. As ever the event is being held at Aldwark Manor and the cost of £200 + Vat includes pre golf bacon roll, ploughman's lunch, refreshments at the halfway house, a barbecue and prizes.

The picture on page 14 of last month's issue was actually of the 11th hole on Parasampia G&CC, Newbury, and not The Berkshire. The image had been included on the disc of what had been assumed to be all Berkshire Golf Club images. Apologies to both golf clubs and to any reader who may have been confused.

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