

**YOUR LETTERS ARE NEEDED!**

Send to: Scott MacCallum, Editor, Greenkeeper International, BIGGA HOUSE, Aldwark, Alne, York YO61 1UF, or email them to: [scott@bigga.co.uk](mailto:scott@bigga.co.uk)

**A Great Help**

I thought that I would write to thank BIGGA for all of the help, support and guidance that the Association afforded me over the past year. In a recent editorial in Greenkeeper International there appeared to be some debate over the fact that BIGGA was not a union and if this were to be the case then greenkeepers could be better looked after. Scott refuted this.

I would like to express the fact that everyone at BIGGA did their upper most to support me during my redundancy situation. From the moment that I contacted BIGGA to ask for representation at a series of consultation meetings the support was total. Everyone at BIGGA helped me to get through a difficult time and successfully back into work, as a greenkeeper. During the consultation process BIGGA helped to form rational arguments to support my claim that the redundancy could be avoided. During the meetings Rachael Palmer sat at my side, after propping me and correlating evidence to support me. Rachael intervened where necessary and worked towards supporting me in formulating my arguments. Rachael taped all of my meetings with the Golf Club and witnessed my then Club Secretary described the job of Head Greenkeeper as "hardly rocket science". At this point Rachael sternly defended both greenkeepers and myself. Her professional attitude, assistance and diligence were invaluable throughout this process.

During the period of my unemployment numerous things were done to assist me in trying to secure a job. Rachael was extremely useful in correlating all information and sent it to General Legal Protection. This of course is the company that deals with our legal issues.

Through this company a solicitor from Langleys was appointed to represent me, after I had been made redundant. Through him a settlement was made between myself and my previous employer concerning the redundancy issue. This I could not have afforded to do on my own, and to that end I was not required to pay anything, as BIGGA were picking up the legal expenses.

Rachael also arranged for forms to be sent off allowing me to claim back part of the costs for my subscriptions to BIGGA from the Inland Revenue.

In Ken Richardson's capacity as Education and Training Manager he allowed me to apply for the higher education training fund that is sponsored by Ransomes Jacobsen. This request was duly granted, and allowed me to complete the final year of my HND Turf Science and Golf Course Management course.

I have now completed this successfully and I was awarded the Ernest Jones Award from Myerscough. This award goes to the top HND student for a turf course.

The award of the scholarship came at a time when I could not have afforded to pay for the final year myself. Allied to this the college selected me as their representative for the Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year and I am currently in the final.

These are just some of the reasons why I believe that being a member of BIGGA gives excellent value for money. I believe that the organisation does look after its members extremely well. As my case demonstrates. I do not believe changing the nature of the organisation will lead to greater support, as it is already high on their list of priorities.

For years I never utilised my membership to its full, simply because I never had reason to use it the way I have over the past year. It gave me great comfort to know that during my tempestuous time that the whole of BIGGA was standing shoulder to shoulder with me. Reason enough, I believe, to be a member.

It is reassuring that at the point of need there is someone there able to assist and represent us, as individuals and the whole of the greenkeeping industry.

On a final note please accept my sincere thanks for selecting me to be the National Finalist for the Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year. It was a most unexpected surprise to be chosen, bearing in mind the calibre of the other contestants, some of whom I met after my interview at the Hilton Hotel.

Keith Scruton, Head Greenkeeper, Colne Golf Club

**The late David Halford**

It is with great regret to hear the news of David Halford passing away from this life recently. David always had a cheery smile whenever I bumped into him at the various trade shows and had a very dry sense of humour which he used to great effect in his own inimitable way. I was fortunate to have David teach me machinery at Myerscough college during 1978-81. He had a good knack of getting the main points across but not all the students found his tact and humour to their liking. He had exceptional knowledge in his chosen field. There is no doubt he was a unique character. I was one of the many students who passed through his own machinery renovation club where we would strip down these rusty old relics and with lots of love and hard work, turn them round into new looking, pristine machines. It has been one of a personal joy to track down, some years ago, the collection of restored machines that now sit in a barn at the National Trust property at Trevice House, near Newquay in Cornwall. This, among other achievements, will remain testament to David's success in this business. Hopefully all the data he collated on the machines may appear in a book of some form so that as time passes by there is a good record of an important part of the early heritage of greenkeeping. He will be greatly missed by all those whose lives he touched.

David Haskell-Craig MG, Course Manager, Maidenhead Golf Club

**Many Thanks**

I would like to pass on my thanks to the many greenkeepers who made up the Support Team for this year's Open Championship at Royal St George's.

Not only did the Support Team perform their duties professionally during the days of the Championship, they also aided me in preparing the bunkers before play got underway in the morning.

My staff and I enjoyed meeting some old faces and some new faces in the BIGGA marquee and we look forward to the next time we meet.

Once again many thanks to the Support Team for their invaluable time in helping the green staff at Royal St Georges.

Neil Metcalf,  
Head Greenkeeper,  
Royal St George's Golf Club