



Welcome

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF "BEST PRACTICE"

February saw the birth of a venture which may prove to be one of the most important and useful the game of golf has seen in some time.

The launch of the R&A's Best Practice Guidelines - Website www.bestcourseforgolf.org - gives all those golf clubs, which are looking to do the right thing but are unsure of the direction in which to go, a real steer.

It will also give Course Managers and Head Greenkeepers, struggling to pull their clubs in the right direction, a useful ally and pointer when it comes to tackling those in the club who feel they know best.

Many people within the game had felt that the R&A needed to provide a lead in such matters and it was R&A Chief Executive, Peter Dawson, who three years ago grabbed the nettle, formed the Golf Course Committee and challenged its members to come up with a method of helping clubs to go about things in the correct manner, not just in Britain, but in large chunks of the world as well.

"Best Practice" is defined as "Management of golf courses in an environmentally and economically sustainable way".

As you will have seen from last month's magazine what has been produced is a user-friendly website which gives assistance in five areas of real importance to golf clubs - management, greenkeeping, environment, planning and development and advice and research.

Of course, you can have the most useful tool in the world but if people don't take advantage of it the benefits are rendered null and void so it is pleasing to hear from Steve Isaac, Assistant Director of Golf Course Management at the R&A, that the first month on-line has been very successful.

A total of 337 clubs have registered from 40 countries with 62% of them coming from Great Britain and Ireland. Of these, 18 clubs have actually started the process laid down by the site, in showing the commitment to bring Best Practice to their clubs.

In addition 15 national Golf Unions and Federations have signed up. Also encouraging is the fact that 3,442 visitors have taken a look at the site and there were over 150,000 hits in the first month.

"Our Committee is delighted with the response in the site's first month on line but would encourage more clubs and Federations to register," said Steve.

I would endorse that. It costs nothing to take a look and I'm sure that if you were to register and get involved in the site, three things can happen, all good:

1. If you are struggling with a particular problem the site should be able to help you towards a solution.
2. The R&A name carries a lot of kudos and clout and it might be the catalyst needed to move the course in the direction you wish.
3. It might just rubber stamp the fact that you are on the right lines. Having that in your back pocket when you next attended a Green Committee would be a nice little piece of insurance.

Scott MacCallum, Editor

THANK YOU FROM THE THOMAS'

My family and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all friends and colleagues who gave us such incredible support during Neil's illness and ultimately his death.

Many thanks to all who attended the funeral which was a truly memorable occasion and a wonderful tribute to Neil.

I would also like to thank everyone for the many cards, messages, letters and donations which were very much appreciated.

We received over 300 cards, and donations to St. Michael's Hospice have amounted to over £1,500.

As many of you will be aware, Neil received the most wonderful care for the six weeks that he was a patient at the hospice so I know this money will be put to good use. Many thanks to you all once again.

Elaine, Scott, Grant, Adam, Natalie and family.

BIGGA'S NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR APPOINTED



John Pemberton has been appointed BIGGA's new Executive Director in succession to Neil Thomas, who died in February.

John, who had been Acting Executive Director during Neil's

illness, was offered the position by the Board of Management after the March Board meeting.

"John has done a superb job for the Association during a very difficult time," said BIGGA National Chairman, Andy Campbell.

"John enjoys the full support of the Board of Management and I know that with his

experience, drive and enthusiasm the BIGGA membership can be sure that the Association is in safe hands. BIGGA is very lucky to possess high quality staff and you can be sure that John will get the most from them and move the Association forward."

John joined BIGGA in 1993 as Finance and Administration Manager and was promoted to Deputy Executive Director last year.

"I am delighted to have been given the Board's endorsement and am sure that with the team we have at BIGGA we will continue to move the Association on from strength to strength," said John.

A profile of BIGGA's new Executive Director will appear in the May issue of Greenkeeper International.

THE RUNNING MAN

Pennard Golf Club Course Manager, Peter Lacey, is in full training at the moment for the gruelling 26.2 miles of the London Marathon.

Peter has already lined up £700 worth of sponsorship and if that is not sufficient encouragement for him to complete the race he has vowed to tail Nell McAndrew for the length of the race.

"I want to break four hours and with a real effort, and in Nell's slipstream, I'd love to complete it in three and a half hours," said Peter, who has already worn out three pairs of trainers in gearing up for the race.

"I'm currently training for at least four and mostly five or even six nights per week and alternating running with cycling in the gym.

"On each run I cover between eight and 12 miles, mostly off road, while I do a big run of between 16 and 20 miles on a Sunday. With a little luck and a load of cod-liver oil and glucosamine sulphate pills I'll stay injury free in the run up.

The race is at the end of this month and anyone who wishes to sponsor Peter, who is running in aid of the British Heart Foundation, can contact him on 01792 233923.

