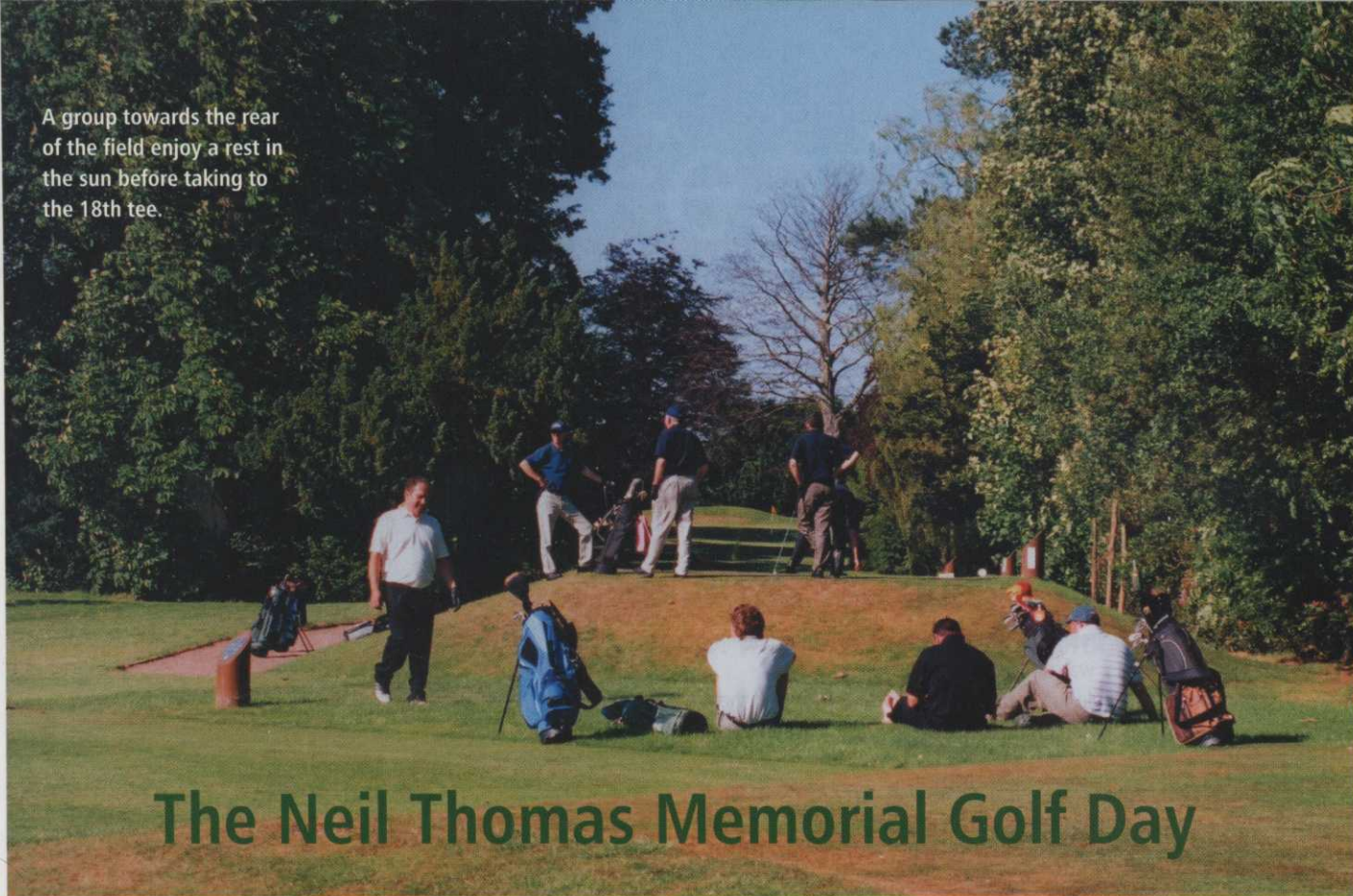


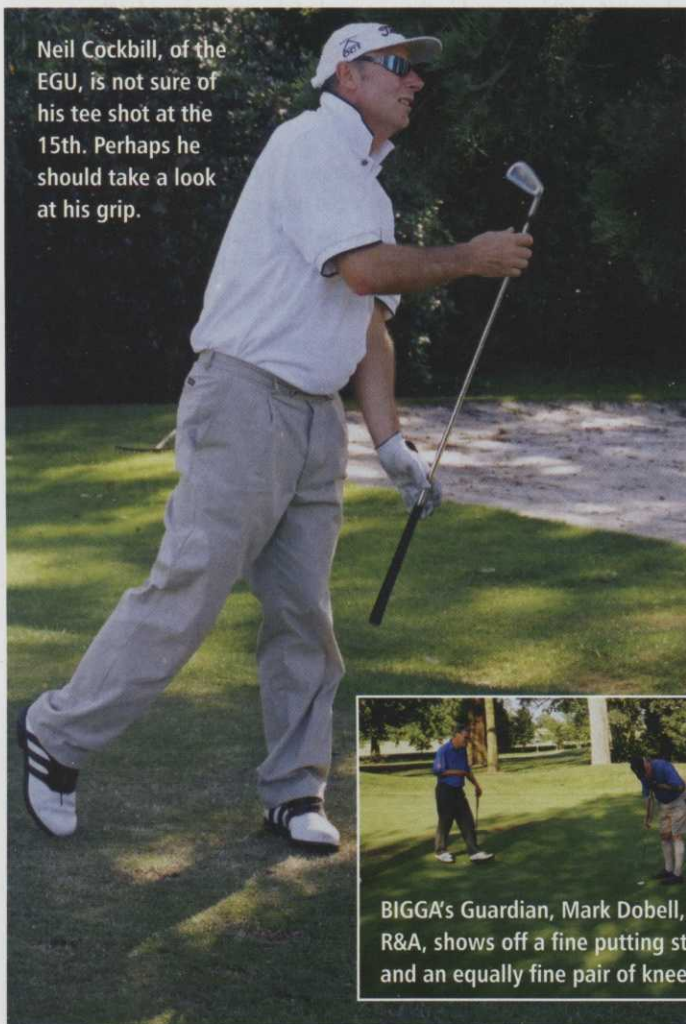
A group towards the rear of the field enjoy a rest in the sun before taking to the 18th tee.



The Neil Thomas Memorial Golf Day

Golf day success

Neil Cockbill, of the EGU, is not sure of his tee shot at the 15th. Perhaps he should take a look at his grip.



Scott MacCallum reviews the annual BIGGA Golf Day, held at Aldwark Manor

The 2004 BIGGA Golf Day was different from the previous eight that had been played.

Sure, as usual the sun shone, the golf was scintillating and smiles and laughter were the order of the day but this time there was one name at the forefront of everyone's mind and Monday, June 14, 2004 was a particularly poignant occasion.

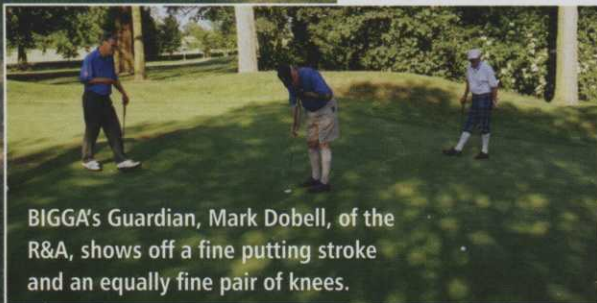
Neil Thomas' final day in BIGGA HOUSE before the illness which was to eventually take his life, took too great a hold on the previous BIGGA Golf Day, so it was particularly fitting that BIGGA's Board of Management should decide to rename the event which has become a fixture in the calendars of so many people within the fine turf industry The Neil Thomas Memorial Golf Day.

It was therefore a great pleasure to welcome Neil's widow, Elaine, and three of their four children Grant, Adam and Natalie, to the occasion and for Elaine to present the prizes.

Elaine was also on hand to receive a painting which had been donated to BIGGA by the Association's Master Greenkeepers which will hang in BIGGA HOUSE as a permanent memory of the Association's first Executive Director.

One of Neil's greatest loves was rugby union and the painting, entitled "The Greatest Try" by Robert Highton, depicted the most famous try ever scored - by Gareth Edwards, for the Barbarians against the All Blacks at Cardiff Arms Park in 1973. Neil had been lucky enough to have been at the match.

On the golfing front we had a shock, the scale of which we hadn't seen since Scotland



BIGGA's Guardian, Mark Dobell, of the R&A, shows off a fine putting stroke and an equally fine pair of knees.



lost 3-1 to Peru in the 1978 World Cup. Lincsgreen didn't win. The team who had scorched their way to victory the previous two years with amazing scores, could only come second!

Their crown was seized by BIGGA's Surrey Section, comprising, Ian Sellars, Tony Bremeer, Antony Freeman and Brian Wilmot who pipped the Lincsgreen 2 team with a superb score of 53.75 in the blustery conditions.

What made the feat all the more remarkable was that the team had driven up to North Yorkshire from the South East in the early hours of the morning and were due to drive back later the same day. It was fitting then that Antony Freeman also won the Longest Drive.

The day, which was again sponsored by the "A" Group of Harrogate Hotels, was topped off by a barbecue prepared by Aldwark Manor Hotel

Tony Bremer, Brian Wilmot, Ian Sellars and Antony Freeman, of the Surrey Section, receive the Neil Thomas Memorial Cup from Elaine Thomas.

during which BIGGA's First Chairman, Walter Woods, recalled Neil Thomas' input into BIGGA and described the drive which had been so instrumental in making the Association the success that it is.

His remarks were sincerely delivered and welcomed by all in attendance, particularly Elaine, Grant, Adam and Natalie.

Results:

1. BIGGA Surrey Section. Ian Sellars, Tony Bremer, Antony Freeman, Brian Wilmot, 53.25; 2. Lincsgreen 2, 55.375; 3. Hunter Grinders, 57.625

Longest Drive: Antony Freeman Nearest the Pin: Ian Semple

Putting Competition: Andy Norton.



▲ Past Chairman, George Brown, receives a plaque to commemorate his year in office from current Chairman, Andy Campbell MG.



Elaine Thomas and Vice Chairman Kerran Daly MG with the picture donated in Neil Thomas' memory by the Association's Master Greenkeepers.

