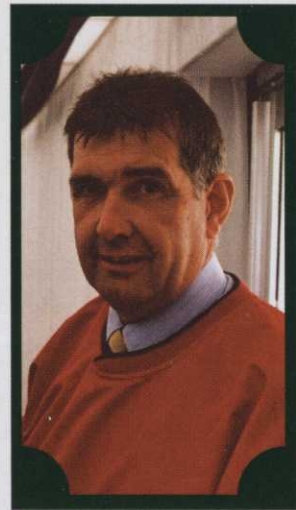




The team pose by a 16th hole bunker after the play-off.



GTC Executive Director, David Golding - visits the Marquee.

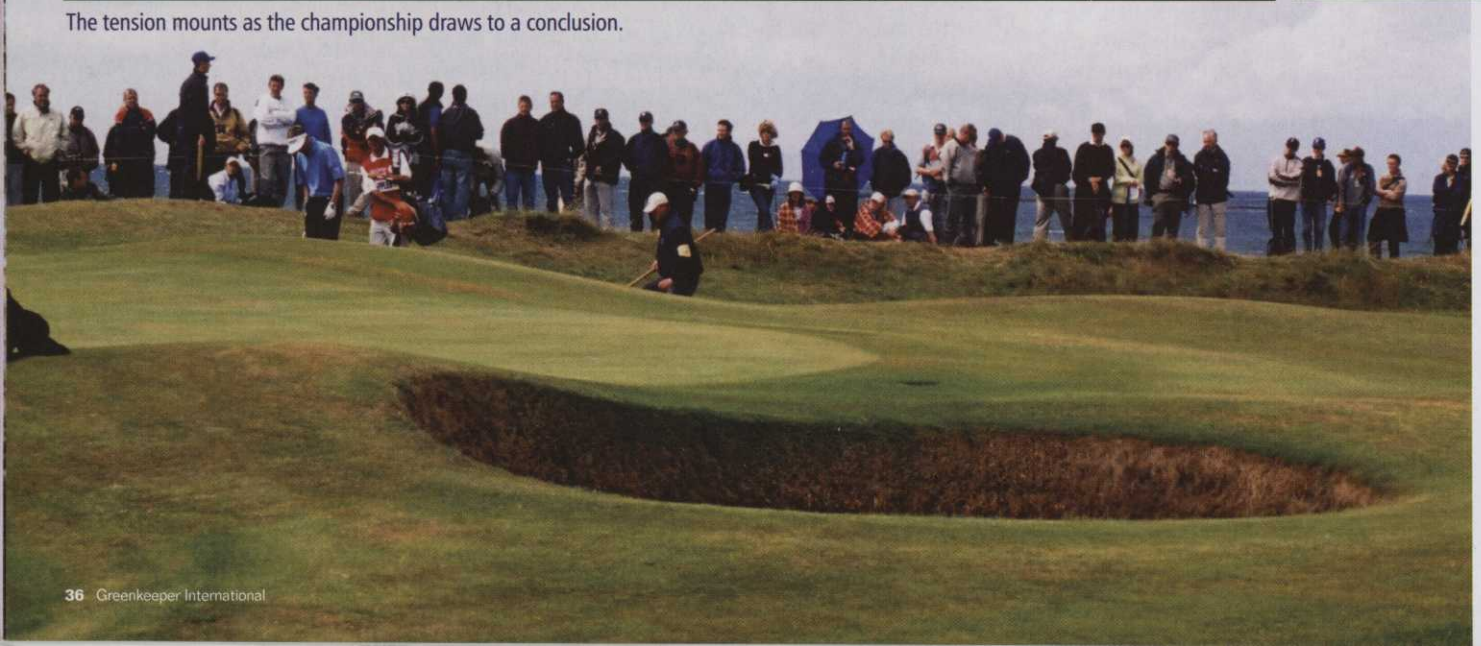
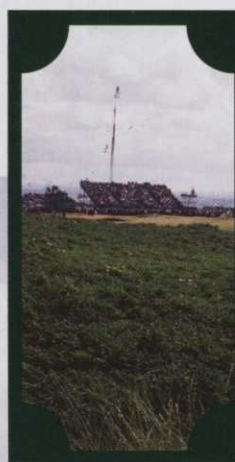


Mike Gash, of Moseley GC, proves he is a true Rogue.

Got it licked!



The tension mounts as the championship draws to a conclusion.





Grant Moir of the R&A explains some of the rules issues the team might face on the eve of the Championship.

Ivor with his picture along side John Pemberton, Chief Executive (left) and Andy Campbell, National Chairman, (right) just after Ivor had sent Todd Hamilton and Ernie Els off on their dramatic final round.



Royal Troon boasts one of the most famous par-3s in the world in the 8th, known the world over as The Postage Stamp. This year the hole again grabbed the headlines when Ernie Els holed-in-one in the opening round, but when it comes to the Championship as a whole it was the BIGGA Greenkeeping Support Team which had the week well and truly licked.

The team boasted a true international flavour with members from America, Canada, Spain and Sweden, joined by an Antipodean touch provided by an Australian and New Zealander both working at clubs in the UK, added to this a couple of Englishmen currently working in Germany. Everyone combined to make it a genuinely successful week with everyone representing the Association well and presenting their profession in a very good light.

Over the week they assisted Royal Troon Course Manager, Billy McLachlan, and his own squad, by preparing the 93 bunkers for play at the beginning of each day while a member of the Team walked with each match ensuring that any bunker visited was raked in a consistent and professional manner.

In all, over the four days 1097 bunkers were raked, 238 more than when the Championship was last played at Troon in 1997, and it brings the total number of bunkers raked by the BIGGA Greenkeeping Support Team since records began in 1995 to 11,223. That's a lot of sand!

● BIGGA RECOGNISES AN UNSUNG HERO

BIGGA honoured Ivor Robson, Official Starter for the Open Championship, as well as a huge number of European Tour events to commemorate his 30th consecutive Open.

Ivor has welcomed many of the legends of the game onto the 1st tee, as well

as coped superbly with the pronunciation intricacies, which have inevitably followed as the game of golf and The Open Championship have grown over the last three decades. In recognition of his unstinting service he was presented with Associate Membership of BIGGA by Association Chairman, Andy Campbell, on the 1st tee once Ernie Els and Todd Hamilton had begun their final round.

"As an Association, BIGGA represents a body of professionals who are often described as 'Unsung Heroes' and we felt it was fitting to recognise a man who for the last three decades has also fitted the description of unsung hero," said Andy.

As well as his Associate Membership card, Ivor was presented with a limited edition Graeme Baxter print of Carnoustie, where in 1975 he officiated at his first Open Championship. The print was signed and personalised by the artist once he had announced the final match.

● MOTIVATIONAL EXCELLENCE

The Sven Goran Eriksson Award for Motivational Excellence goes to Skip Kendall's caddie who complimented his player on a fine shot to the 11th by telling him that it was the first time he'd hit off the middle of the club all day. He was four under at the time - Information supplied by BIGGA Greenkeeping Support Team member Ian Semple, of Old Folds Manor Golf Club.

● FRED KARNO'S CIRCUS

Colin Montgomerie had to put up with a lot during his first round. Not only did he have to carry the weight of expectation of the local man and be followed by a posse of photographers and writers, he also had to cope with a group of irate pensioners demonstrating on the beach as he was playing the 2nd - Information supplied by BIGGA Greenkeeping Support Team member, Mike Gash, of Moseley Golf Club.



Brian Aitken, left, of Turnberry Hotel, leaves the 14th green and Gary Brown, right, of West Herts GC, enjoying the final round.





Deputy Course Manager, Gordon Ross, explains how Royal Troon rake their bunkers to the team.



Vijay Singh and John Mair, of Bellshill GC, stride out on the 5th. He was later presented with a couple of Vijay's golf balls for all his hard work.



● PICCADILLY CIRCUS

"Quiet Please!" Padraig Harrington had to call on his powers of concentration to the full playing the 17th during the opening round. Just as he was about to tee off some children began shouting to each other.

He stopped and readied himself again only for the intercom on the gate of the house adjacent to the tee spark into action to the sound of someone saying "Hello? Hello? Hello?". Third attempt and this time someone dropped a bottle in the grandstand – Information supplied by BIGGA Greenkeeping Support Team member, Kevin Hodges, of Weston Park Golf Club.

● OTHER GREENKEEPER SUPPORT

Amateur Champion, Stuart Wilson had some greenkeeper support during his fine opening round but not just in the shape of the BIGGA Greenkeeping Support Team. Stuart had a greenkeeper on his bag from his home course of Forfar who was caddying for the first time in a major event - Information supplied by BIGGA Greenkeeping Support Team member, Adam Champion, of Olds College, Canada.

● TRAIN DRIVER WITH A SENSE OF HUMOUR

US Open Champion Retief Goosen, Robert Allenby and Jay Haas were the victims of a train driver who doubled up as a comedian when they were playing the 6th on the first day. As they walked up the fairway the train's horn played out the tune "What a load of rubbish – Information supplied by BIGGA Greenkeeping Support Team member, Graham Blum, Aussie from Moor Park Golf Club.

● TEMPER, TEMPER

Past Royal Troon winner Mark Calcavecchia showed no mercy to the scene of his 1989 triumph when, in danger of missing the cut on the 16th he pushed his tee

shot and smashed the tee marker to pieces in anger. He then had to clear up the mess before he moved on - Information supplied by BIGGA Greenkeeping Support Team member, Iain Barr, of Largs Golf Club.

● OFF HIS HEAD

Rory Sabbatini had more than just the bunkers and the rough to cope with on the 12th. The head of his 2-iron flew off as he played his tee shot. He still made par though - Information supplied by BIGGA Greenkeeping Support Team member, Richard Barker.

● WHAT ARE THE CHANCES OF THAT?

Paul Broadhurst and Ignacio Garrido provided the walking referee with an unusual problem on the 14th on the second day when they both hit their tee shots to the same square centimetre of land. Touching each other, one of the balls had to be marked - Information supplied by BIGGA Greenkeeping Support Team member Richard Matteson CGSA, of Pendleton Country Club, Oregon, USA.

● DID HE WALK UNDER A LADDER?

Brian Davies rued his luck on The Postage Stamp. He hit the green with his tee shot but it spun into a bunker. He then played a lovely bunker shot which hit the pin and bounced back into the same bunker. He finished with a five - Information supplied by BIGGA Greenkeeping Support Team member, Iain McLeod, of Tain Golf Club.

● ROYAL APPOINTMENT

Richard Matteson, of Pendleton Country Club, in Oregon, USA, turned to chat to someone standing beside him on the fairway only to discover he was in conversation with the Duke of York. A great tale to take back with him to the

The history of the bigger bunker data

	'95 St. A's	'96 Ly'm	'97 Troon	'98 B'dale	'99 C'stie	'00 St A's	'01 Lym	'02 M'field	'03 St. G's	'04Troon
Bunkers	112	185	84	117	115	112	197	148	106	93
Rd 1	214	501	344	355	539	148	557	359	388	393
Rd 2	201	577	272	406	468	164	547	372	405	371
Rd 3	130	269	107	226	202	65	224	175	149	148
Rd 4	156	271	136	153	265	71	257	169	181	185
Total	701	1618	859	1140	1474	448	1585	1078	1123	1097



Peter Lacey, centre, would have kicked the black cat, had there been one, after the week he had. The search for the stolen bunker rake was singularly unsuccessful.

States. Rob Boyce, of Links (Newmarket) GC had the same experience just beside the 12th tee when he found himself passing the time of day with the Prince, who is the current Captain of the R&A.

● BAD DAY OF THE WEEK 1

Wednesday. Peter Lacey, of Pennard GC, missed his flight to Glasgow Airport because he had to go home to collect his passport... even though he was flying from Wales. His airline of choice has a strict identification policy and his driving licence wasn't sufficient to satisfy everyone at check-in.

● SANTA CLAUS AWARD FOR GENEROSITY

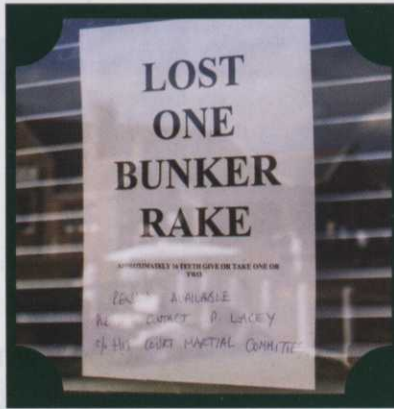
This goes to Justin Austin, of Wind Whistle G&CC, who gave up one of the prime matches on the Sunday. Justin had been given the match featuring Colin Montgomerie and Canadian former Masters Champion Mike Weir but knew that Adam Champion, the Canadian member of the Support Team, was a big fan of Weir but had been unlucky in the ballot and did not have a game on the Sunday.

"I felt that Adam had come all the way from Canada to be on the team and it was a shame that he didn't have a match on the Sunday. I'd only come from England and I knew how much it would mean to him to get the Mike Weir match," said Justin.

Adam was thrilled and promised Justin a drink... well quite a few drinks actually. "I was hoping just to follow Mike Weir's match round on Sunday but to



Adam Champion enjoying that final round with his hero, Mike Weir, thanks to Justin Austin.



Gareth Abernethy, Balmoral GC, Northern Ireland, poses in his Open Championship uniform.

actually be given the match was amazing. I can't thank Justin enough," said Adam, who was later seen out of the course, thoroughly enjoying himself and punching the air whenever his hero produced a birdie.

● BAD DAY OF THE WEEK 2

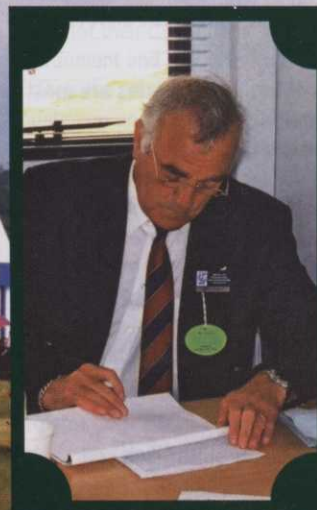
Sunday. Peter Lacey, of Pennard GC again. This time he'd reached the 7th hole of the final round when nature called. He nipped off to the nearest loo carefully leaving his rake in the long grass just inside the ropes. When he returned the rake was gone. It had been stolen.

A frantic search proved unsuccessful so Peter approached the referee with his match and explained his problem. The official laughed and told the players. The players, Brad Faxon and Adam Scott, also laughed and promised not to go into any bunkers until a replacement rake was brought out. The referee passed a message to the BBC who contacted the BIGGA HQ for the week and a rake was rushed out to Peter who by this time had got round to the 10th rakeless. Fortunately his players had been true to their word and hadn't found any sand in that time but Peter had a hard time facing his colleagues when he got in off the course.

A notice subsequently went up seeking information on the stolen rake and announcing the court martial that Peter would be facing as a result of losing his weapon in the heat of battle.

● UNLUCKY PRESIDENT

BIGGA President, Sir Michael Bonallack OBE decided to watch Ernie Els on the first morning and walked the first seven holes with the eventual runner-up. At that stage he walked back to the tented village and popped into the BIGGA Marquee to say hello. It was then during a chat about the golf that he learned that Ernie had aced The Postage Stamp – the 8th! He'd missed the hole-in-one by one hole.



Bert Cross carrying out some work in the BIGGA cabin

