



## Welcome

### END OF A TUMULTUOUS YEAR

As 2004 draws to a close it is perhaps fitting to look back at a year which by any standards has been a tumultuous one for the Association.

It began with the failing health and then untimely passing of the Association's first Executive Director, Neil Thomas. Neil had been at the helm since 1987 and had overseen the Association's development from fledgling body to a highly regarded organisation within the golf world.

His funeral, on a snowy day last February, saw mourners come from all corners of the country and as far afield as the United States and Sweden, a real measure of the respect in which Neil was held and the stature BIGGA has now attained.

That the Association kept on course and even continued to develop during Neil's illness, and in the time since his death, says much for the quality of the team at BIGGA HOUSE and, in particular, John Pemberton, who carried the brunt of the additional responsibility while Neil was on sick leave, and who was subsequently appointed Chief Executive on a permanent basis.

John has put his own stamp on the Association since taking on the top job. He has ensured that he has got himself out and about as much as possible to meet members and listen to their wishes and concerns. It is an approach and formula he has extended to the trade and other bodies within the game of golf and it would be fair to say that John has been rewarded for his time spent on Britain's motorway network, and indeed beyond these shores, with BIGGA's profile at an all time high.

That can only be good news and with John's work being replicated by others at headquarters you can be assured no stone is being left unturned in ensuring that BIGGA's voice, and that of the greenkeeping profession, is being heard and, more importantly, listened to.

With Neil's passing at the beginning of the year it is sad to report another loss at the end. Roland Taylor, who has written for Greenkeeper International for over eight years, died suddenly after a short illness last month.

Indeed the final article he wrote appeared as recently as November's magazine and he had several others in the pipeline and due to appear over the next seven or eight months.

Roland was a thoroughly decent man, well respected within the industry, and a very dependable and conscientious writer. The thoughts of everyone at BIGGA go out to his partner, Hilary, and his family.

For the Thomas and Taylor families this Christmas will be a particularly difficult time – happiness and joy in so many homes but sadness and an emptiness in their own.

Hopefully this Christmas most of the rest of us will be in the fortunate position of experiencing happiness and joy and that we can all use the time to relax, unwind and prepare for what I'd like to think might be a less tumultuous 2005.

**Scott MacCallum**  
Editor

### BUGGY BAN Baffles CLUBS

Confusion is rife about new rules affecting buggy and trolley bans on golf courses, says the National Golf Clubs' Advisory Association (NGCAA).

The Disability Discrimination Act means golf clubs must remove any physical barriers preventing a disabled person from using a course. Failing to do this will make the club liable for damages for unlawful discrimination which could run into thousands.

However, Michael Shaw, National Secretary of the NGCAA, says many clubs are confused about how the Act affects buggy and trolley bans that already exist.

"We've had a surge of queries from clubs

concerned about the legality of buggy and trolley bans on their courses. There is definitely confusion. What is clear is that courts no longer approve a blanket ban.

"However, clubs are entitled to impose a ban which restricts access to those parts of the course it is necessary to preserve.

"They must also implement a ban if the health and safety of any individual is at risk due to weather and ground conditions.

"It is vital that clubs are able to justify any ban they impose and they must have documentation in place to explain the reasons behind it," added Shaw.



### ROBSON OPENS RANSOMES JACOBSEN OFFICE

One of Ransomes Jacobsen's biggest and longest standing fans opened the new office block on their existing Ipswich site last month.

Sir Bobby Robson, who has managed Ipswich Town, England and Newcastle United among many others, had retained a house in Ipswich for 34 years until recently.

He told the assembled guests that he had inherited a Ransomes cylinder mower when he bought the house and had passed the same mower on to the new owners when he left earlier this year.

"I was once at the Sydney Cricket Ground and saw a groundsman cutting the square with a Ransomes machine so I just had to go up and tell him that I came from the same town as where his

machine had been made," said Sir Bobby, who, for all his obvious knowledge of the company, was making his first visit.

"I'd never been to the factory before but the whole football club knew where it was because so many of the Ransomes workers were Ipswich Town season ticket holders. In fact I used to joke that a great midfield would have been Ransomes, Simms and Jeffries," said Sir Bobby.

Recently appointed Ransomes Jacobsen Managing Director, David Withers, had earlier accompanied Sir Bobby around the plant introducing him to many of the staff while invited guests were given a guided tour of Ipswich Town's ground, Portman Road.



### DEREK'S NEW ROLE IN DUNDEE

Derek Hoskins, of the Scottish Central Section, has been promoted to Parks Duty Officer with Dundee City Council.

Derek has been on duty for the Council for 24 years, as an apprentice, assistant and Head Greenkeeper on the Camperdown Golf Course, one of two courses Dundee City Council own.

Derek's new role will see him swap

his steal toecaps and thermals for the less unfamiliar shirt and tie combination, as he oversees the greenkeeping team at the second Council course, Caird Park. In an ironic twist, Derek actually started his greenkeeping career at Caird Park, seeing out the first two years of his apprenticeship, before moving to Camperdown.