



Welcome

## MEMORIES OF NEIL THOMAS

Everyone who knew Neil Thomas well will have a memory of him that in the years to come, whenever his name is brought up in conversation, they will be able to recall, and then smile.

Having been with Neil at virtually every one of BIGGA's major events over the last nine years – ironically poor health didn't prevent either of us from attending any of these until Neil's devastating illness – I have been fortunate enough to have quite a few of these memories.

There were the Harrogate weeks which Neil always used to relish, despite the fact that the pressure on the week to succeed was immense; there were also Saltexes; National Championships; Open Championship weeks and any number of other occasions which we attended on behalf of the Association – he to do the formal bit and me to record them for the magazine.

After a long day it would be back to the hotel for a wash, a change and then out for a meal. It was often then that you saw Neil at his most relaxed, enjoying a glass of wine and entering into whatever conversation happened to be amusing the table at the time. He had an insatiable thirst for gossip but, such was his knowledge of what was going on in the industry, he was able to pour cold water on many of the tales which, let's be fair, do tend to grow particularly tall in this industry.

You see he had a vast network of "informants" who kept him up to date with movements and events within the industry. It wasn't the first time I'd shoot off to his office with news, hot off the press, only to learn that he'd heard it some time before.

But back to the memories. There was the trip to Finland, back in the mid-90s where Neil and I were introduced to the invigorating delights of the Finnish sauna, completed with a plunge into a freezing cold lake; the series of Hayter competitions, including the Hayter International Cup match in Atlanta, an experience no-one privileged enough to attend will ever forget and, of course, the opening of BIGGA HOUSE, by HRH the Duke of York, in October 1998.

Neil often used to talk about how he started off in a single room in the STRI building, at Bingley, with just himself and a secretary. To have seen the Association grow to the extent that we had our own purpose built office building, opened by a member of the Royal Family, showed just how far the Association had come. I know it made Neil extremely proud.

We also shared an interest in rugby and we would often sit in his office and bemoan the current form of our two national sides. The fact that Wales cuffed Scotland in the Millennium Stadium just before he died would certainly not have been lost on him. I know he was the first person I thought of when the final whistle went.

There you are. One of those memories popping up already.

Scott MacCallum, Editor

## NEW AWARDS

The IOG is launching new Senior Awards this month which will provide important career advancement opportunities for greenkeepers as well as sports and amenity turf managers.

The IOG has been granted Delegated Authority by City and Guilds to award Licentiate and Graduate awards in Sports Turf Management.

The Licentiate Award (comparable to NVQ Level Four) is suitable for team supervisors and first line managers who have already achieved a NVQ Level Three equivalent qualification and have at least five years experience in the industry. Assessment is by means of a review of a detailed portfolio of career extension evidence.

The Graduateship Award (comparable to Honours Degree or NVQ Level Five) is aimed at more senior managers. The IOG offers two routes of entry for this award – the Project Route which requires a 10,000 word work-based thesis, and a direct route for those who have already achieved a Level Four equivalent qualification and who can provide a comprehensive statement of management achievement together with supporting evidence. Both routes require attendance at an interview board. Award holders are entitled to use the appropriate letters LCGI or UCGI after their name.

## A HISTORIC REUNION

At The BTME Clubhouse exhibition in January this year, I had the pleasure of re-uniting an ex-greenkeeper with the 1964 18-inch Auto Certes greens mower he used on a daily basis at Cotswold Hills Golf Club during the 1970s. It had his name

"Rob" on the fuel tank. Robin Greaves, went on to become Head Greenkeeper at Bristol and Clifton and then Course Manager at Thornbury Golf Centre, Avon, before becoming a salesman for Countrywide, sports turf division.

It is an honour to be associated with the history of these machines. Think of all those man-hours and expertise that Rob's

mower witnessed over its 40 years of frontline service cutting greens on a daily basis for at least 20 years and then as a back-up unit for 20 years. All those special days for club events.

Peter Hampton



## SISIS ADD TO TEAM



▲ Ian Campbell

Sisis has made three new appointments to its sales team.

After 22 years with Sisis, firstly in development and then as part of the demonstration team, Ian Campbell has now been appointed Territory Manager for Lancashire, Cheshire, Staffs and North Wales. He has a huge amount of experience of Sisis products and looks forward to meeting customers old and new.

Allan Gray is the new Territory Manager for N.E England and Cumbria. His experience in the industry will be of great value to Sisis customers,

many of whom will know him from his time as a Director of Yorkshire Mowers, and more recently as Area Manager for IBEA.

John Milner has been appointed as Demonstrator for S.E. England, working from the Sisis Depot at Merrist Wood College, supporting the S.E Sales team. Jon has experience of the hire trade and has four year's experience as a cricket groundsman at Championship Division 1 level.



▲ Allan Gray



▲ John Milner

## SPEEDCUT JOIN UP

Speedcut Contractors Limited based in Oxfordshire, have been elected associate members of the BAGCC, following a recent invitation to join the Association.

"Having admired the professionalism and

quality of workmanship set by the Association and its members for many years, we are delighted that we now have the opportunity to contribute in a positive way from the confines of this prestigious organisation," said Kevin Smith, Contracts Manager.

## INCREASING COVERAGE

Lloyds & Co, Letchworth, has appointed dealers in some areas not currently very well covered by its direct sales team.

EAZI lif'e Groundcare a division of Malpas Tractors based in Wrexham has been appointed as the new dealer to cover North Wales and Shropshire.

They have taken on demonstration equipment, Leda gang mowers and Paladin fine turf mowers, which are available for demonstrations to customers while larger equipment will be supported, in the short term, from Lloyd's demonstration fleet.

Pictured with the Lloyds Paladin Mowers, from left, are Roy Williams, Groundcare Sales Manager with Jeff Stockton and Rachael Reeves, Managing Director of Malpas Tractors, and Clive Nottingham Managing Director of Lloyds & Co.



## ON COURSE WINNER

One of the first duties of BIGGA's new Chairman, Andy Campbell, was to draw the winning ticket in Vitax's annual greenkeepers' raffle at BTME.

Mike Stokes, of Whitchurch (Cardiff) Golf Club, took the prize of a gift voucher entitling him to £150's worth of BIGGA merchandise, which he is hoping to put towards the Association's "On Course" software package.

"This is a package compiled by greenkeepers, for greenkeepers. As well as spread sheets for fertiliser and maintenance, the software covers report writing, which I would find very useful. There was a demo disc here when I arrived two years ago, but it has now run out. Hopefully I'll soon be using the latest version," said Mike.



## GREEN APPLE AWARD

MOX UK, specialists in the contract hire of golf vehicles and turf machinery, have recently been awarded the prestigious Green Apple Award. The award was presented was to Glynn Patrick, MOX's General Manager, at a ceremony at the Houses of Parliament where the likes of Ford, Fiat and Toyota were also honoured.

The Green Apple Awards are given each year by The Green Organisation which is an independent group dedicated to promoting the positive side of environmental endeavour. They achieve this by recognising and publicising individuals and organisations who are making the effort to preserve and protect the environment for future generations. MOX received their award for their work on pollution free electric golf vehicles.



The photo shows Glynn Patrick (right) receiving the award from Roger Wolens, of The Green Organisation. BIGGA won a Green Apple Award several years ago.

## NEW CHAIRMAN

John Hall, European Marketing Manager, of Bayer Environmental Science, has taken over the role of Chairman of the Amenity Horticulture Committee (AHC).

In future the committee will be called the Amenity Expert Group.

The AHC meets twice a year, bringing together representatives from all of the major companies in the amenity/horticulture industry.

It acts as a channel through to the Health and Safety Executive and Trading Standards as well as the Pesticides Safety Directorate and also works to promote the Government's Voluntary Initiative on minimising the environmental impacts of pesticides.

John Hall brings a wealth of experience to the committee, having worked in the technical/commercial and marketing areas of the industry for over eight years.

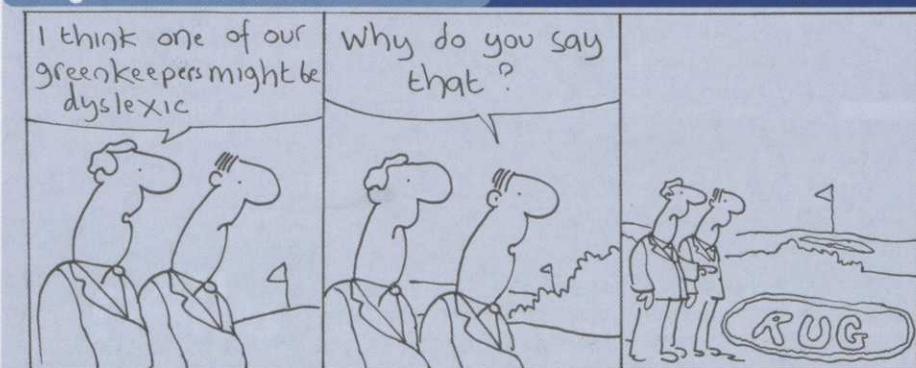
"It is my aim to continue the good work of the committee in promoting best practice in the amenity and horticulture industry to work towards a better environment," John commented. "In the short/medium term this will be achieved through the important channel of the voluntary initiative," he said.

## WRONG NUMBER

The telephone number listed for the White Horse Contractors (Northern) Ltd appeared incorrectly in last month's magazine. The number should have been 01845 567711. Apologies for any confusion.

## Royal Inverdivot GC...

Strip Cartoonist of the Year [www.tonyhusband.co.uk](http://www.tonyhusband.co.uk)



## JOBS IN IRELAND

www.golfjobs.ie is the only website dedicated to recruitment for the Irish Golf Industry. Jobseekers can register immediately and gain access to the best golf positions available.

It has been established in response to the increasing demand for specialist staff to service the expanding golf industry in Ireland. The internet has revolutionised the way employers recruit the best candidates and the golf industry has been neglected, until now.

www.golfjobs.ie is a central point for all employers and golf clubs to pool their marketing power and create an easier way for candidates to find golf related positions from Greenkeepers and ground staff to golf shop assistants and catering staff.



▲ Christy O'Connor Jnr launched the site

## NEW MAN FOR BARENBRUG

Barenbrug has added to its sales force with the appointment of Warren Jefford as Area Sales Manger for the north of England and Wales as well as all of Scotland.

The position has been made



available due to the promotion of Jayne Leyland, who used to oversee the north of England, to Senior Area Manager.

Warren, who lives in north Manchester, will be working closely with distributors, and increasing the sales of the Barenbrug product range among local authority, amenity and sports customers, as well as turf growers.

Previously, he spent three years as technical sales representative with construction and amenity products distributor Rigby Taylor, in Lancashire.

## NIGHT OF AWARDS

The Hayter Dinner, a Harrogate tradition for ten years, was its usual splendid occasion crowned at the end of the evening with the presentation of dealer awards.

Commercal Dealer of the Year was George Brown Implements Ltd; Outstanding Commercal Dealer of the Year was Oakleys Ltd, of Shropshire;

Export Dealer of the Year was Lyngfeldt of Denmark while the special Achievement of the Year went to Harry Gillespie of Cyril Johnston & Co Ltd.

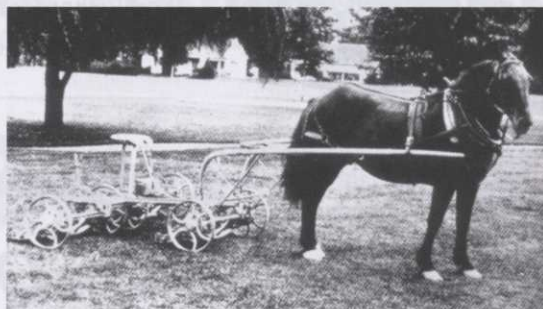
Amid a host of other presentations was a selection of cycling accessories for Hayter Managing Director Derek Boulton, who is about to cycle the length of Britian.



Picture shows Robert Bland, Director of Oakley's being presented with his award by Sales Director David Sturges.

Email press releases and new product updates to: [scott@bigga.co.uk](mailto:scott@bigga.co.uk)

## HERITAGE !



Don't put our heritage in a skip Mr Greenkeeper  
Don't put our heritage in a skip.  
The machine's a dog and very old  
It's obsolete so you've been told,  
It stops when hot and won't start cold  
And you're now due for your watch of gold --  
Don't put our heritage in a skip.

Don't put our heritage in a skip Mr Greenkeeper  
Don't put our heritage in a skip.  
You've followed it for years and years  
Through all the highs and all those tears,  
So now retire it to pastures new  
For all your friends to admire and view  
Don't put our heritage in a skip.

Don't put our heritage in a skip Mr Greenkeeper  
Don't put our heritage in a skip.  
It's given all it's life to you  
So please now take the longer view.  
People are here that think it's great  
To fix it up and show your mates  
Don't put our heritage in a skip.  
I beg you Please Mr Greenkeeper, Please Mr Greenkeeper

Scribbler: Peter Hampton

"With no regrets to Mr Noel Coward"

UK Territory Manager, Bernhard and Company Ltd

Home phone: 01225 755864. E-mail: [peter@bernhard.co.uk](mailto:peter@bernhard.co.uk)

## NEIL HOTCHKIN

Neil Hotchkin, a past President of the English Golf Union and described by many as perhaps the most outstanding man in the history of the union, has died, two days after his 90th birthday.

Mr Hotchkin was the man behind the sale of Woodhall Spa to the union in 1995 which not only ensured the future of one of the finest inland courses in the world but secured a modern headquarters for the EGU.

## IS IT A RECORD?

With the golf season just around the corner I reflecting on achievements at McDonald Golf Club, Ellon. Without checking the Guinness Book of Records I believe McDonald Golf Club could have two records.

Firstly 16 holes in one were recorded during the year. Secondly, ten of these holes in one were at the same hole. The 15th. The Girdle, 147 yard par-3.

So is there a golf club out there who can surpass this achievement? I look forward to reading or hearing from anyone.

PS. Two holes in one have been recorded on the same hole during January of this year.

John Geddes, Head Greenkeeper, McDonald Golf Club, Ellon