



## Welcome

### 10 LONG YEARS

Having been dragged out to York on a shopping expedition last weekend I caught sight of a bloke reflected in a shop window. He looked alright I suppose, not quite as athletic as he'd no doubt wish to be, a little grey haired and generally a little worn round the edges. All in all a fairly bog standard middle aged guy. I looked again and it was me.

It is genuinely depressing but it's reassuring to know that it happens to us all - the growing gap between the age we feel and the age we look but it still brings it home to you. Do you ever look at pictures of people in newspapers, whose age is listed as the same as your own, and think they look positively ancient?

But time does march on. I was shocked when thumbing through my diary recently to work out that as of April 24 I'd been with BIGGA for 10 years. It seems to have gone in a flash but thinking back a lot has happened in that decade.

For a start John Major was the Prime Minister when I started; back in '95 when someone mentioned Big Brother people thought of George Orwell and not Jade Goody; Chelsea were one of English football's also-rans while a young amateur by the name of Tiger Woods paid his first visit to the UK in the Walker Cup at Royal Porthcawl.

The shape of the industry has also changed markedly since April '95. Companies which once stood toe to toe in competition are now merged and sharing a hymn sheet. Some, sadly, are no longer with us while there are others which have come and gone within those 10 years. The latter represent a demonstration of the widely held view that the golf business draws people to it in the belief that the fairways are paved with gold only for the nagging realisation to kick in that it is a relatively small industry with an unfeasibly large number of people attempting to feed off a cake too small for the purpose.

Through all of this the Association has grown in stature on all fronts during the period when I have aged so depressingly. Education has developed through the work of our own Education Department and the superb relationship we have with the GTC to take account of the demands of a modern fast moving profession while membership benefits and services have also adapted to cater for the particular demands of people working in a singularly quirky industry.

I can also remember my first Harrogate week in '96 and marvelling at the sheer scale of it all. However, in today's terms the '96 version would be considered small and the numbers which delighted exhibitors then would be regarded as no more than "steady" now.

No, I may no longer be the young thrusting 30 something who joined the Association those 10 years ago but at least a lot has been achieved in that time.

**Scott MacCallum, Editor**

### PROMOTING EDUCATION ABROAD



Left to Right: Ivie Davies, Radio Presenter and Golf Writer, Rafael Gonzalez-Carrascosa and Mark Ellis

Greenkeeper Mark Ellis has been busy in Spain appearing on radio broadcasts on Spectrum Radio promoting the importance of greenkeeper education. Mark has been joined in his crusade by Rafael Gonzalez-Carrascosa, the Course Manager at Alicante Golf Club.

The topic of the programme mainly focused on the differences in greenkeeping between Spain and

Britain. In Spain the majority of greenkeepers come from an agricultural background and due to the changes in farming in the country many farm workers are now moving into the amenity sector. Despite the vast number of golf courses in Spain it lacks any greenkeeper training courses according to Mark.

"I shall be seeing Rafael in a few days, he wants me to help him with regard to greenkeeper training. It would appear that many assistant greenkeepers in Spain are illiterate. I explained that if he made learning more enjoyable for them, they would soon start to enjoy what they are doing on the golf course," said Mark, who also took the opportunity to explain about the work that the GTC and FEGGA do.

Rafael and Mark will be doing more radio work in the coming months in the hope of further promoting greenkeeper training and they will also be covering topics such as Health and Safety, the use of chemicals and ecology on the golf course.

### COLIN WHITE 1955 - 2005

It is with great sadness that we have to announce that Colin White, 50, passed away after a short illness on Saturday March 26 2005. Colin was a much-loved member of our industry, known to most as 'Chalky'. He could always see good in everything he saw and brightened up the day for all his customers. He will be truly missed by all his family, work colleagues and customers alike.

He started his career as Groundsman at Southampton FC's Old Dell Stadium before taking over at Tottenham Hotspur FC in 1976. During his nine years White Hart Lane staged many great games, including the UEFA Cup Final in 1984. As always Colin created an excellent surface, the then Manager, Keith Burkinshaw, often described the pitch as: "The best in the country."

Colin left Tottenham Hotspur in 1985 taking on a sales role with Rigby Taylor and in 1995 he joined Avoncrop Amenity Products as Technical Sales Manager for Essex, later moving areas to cover Hampshire, Berkshire, parts of Dorset and Buckinghamshire, continuing to make many new friends in the course of his work. Colin will also be



Chalky, far left, with members of the South Coast Section remembered as an ardent Saints supporter, as a life long season ticket holder, he missed very few home games.

We extend our condolences to his family and friends at this sad time. The funeral took place on Wednesday April 6, at Basingstoke Crematorium, followed by a Celebration of Chalky's life at St John's Church, New Alresford, and later at Alresford Golf Club.

Donations in his memory to McMillan Cancer Relief can be sent c/o: R.S. & Partners, 12-14 City Road, Winchester, SO23 8SG.



### RADIO GA GA

BIGGA's Assistant Accountant, Steve Coates, was Radio Ga Ga after winning a new car on a local radio station. The final stages involved a number of knock out activities, including pin the key on the car, head to head questions and guess the mileage.

After beating all that stood in his way, Steve was left with a choice of keys, which represented different cars, and the accountant chose the car key to a sparkling new Peugeot 206.