

Letters

LOST WEEKEND

It is a sad time for me, as I draw into my 80s and see my old greenkeeping friends like Willie Ritchie pass on to, we hope, The Happy Golfing Ground.

I was Secretary of the BIGGA West Section for 12 years in the 60s. Willie, if I remember rightly, was Secretary of the North, which in those days did not stretch beyond Dundee.

I am remembering the North Section's Annual Dinner and Whist Drive. I was invited on many occasions but I only managed one year. It was a change from the dinner speeches all the other Sections held in those days. I have to say, Willie had done his homework to make all of these occasions a great success and a boost to the Section's funds. BIGGA held its Annual Golfing Outing all over Scotland. This year I refer to 'The Scottish', which was held at Royal Burgess Golfing Society of Edinburgh.

I had been in Willie's company most of the day. As James McCormack said in Willie's obituary - May issue of Greenkeeper International - Willie, like myself, liked a dram or two or three – need I go on? Willie got his train to Dundee from Waverley Station, as I did for Lenzie. We got a taxi to the station as Edinburgh is a foreign city when one has had a 'few'. I saw Willie on his train – anyway he said it was his train, the next day I got a telephone call. The voice said 'That you, Cecil?' I recognised Willie's broad North East accent, 'Aye, it's me – that you Willie?' 'Aye it is. You put me on the wrong bloody train.' 'No I did not. You said it was your train.' 'Ah, well I'm in Aberdeen, Cecil. Have you got ma clubs?' 'No Willie, you had them when you got on the train.' 'Well, av nae got them noo.' 'Perhaps you left them on the train.' 'Ah, well we will have to wait an see.'

The next Monday I got another telephone call – 'That you Cecil?' 'Yes' – 'It's me, Willie. Ah thought I'd let you know I've got ma clubs. I put them in the left luggage in Aberdeen.'

There must be a moral to these telephone calls. Knowing Willie and being a kindred spirit, who was caring, I only hope wherever Willie is he hasn't lost his clubs.

Cecil N George

DERRICK 'ALF' BURKIN

9 August 1924 to 19 June 2007

In the early 1970's Alf worked at Pease Cottage Golf Club, helping to build one of the first courses to use creeping bent. He then went on to Sandy Lodge in Middlesex where he worked closely with Jim Arthur. From there he moved to Farnham Park until 1978 and then to Bishop's Stortford in Hertfordshire. He ended his greenkeeping career at Ely City in 1985.

Alf is survived by his wife, Irene and his two sons, one of whom – Bob – maintains the greenkeeping tradition at Chippenham Golf Club.

Yours faithfully

Bob Burkin

CARNOUSTIE 2007

Just a quick thank you for all your hard work prior to and during the Open.

The team from HQ were fantastic, all the bases covered and running like clockwork, fantastic!

As for the support team, everyone was in good spirits and relaxed throughout the event, which again is down to the superb organisation.

*Yours Sincerely
Gary Cunningham
Course Manager
Trentham Park Golf Club*

SOMEBODY UP THERE LOVES HIM!

It is difficult to predict weather. It is even more difficult to predict Scottish weather. Whoever is in charge of the Celestial Heavens' weather must like Harry Diamond.

On Sunday, July 8, we had another perfect golfing day at the Belleisle GC for the Harry Diamond Memorial Quaich. As usual, golfers were falling over themselves to play in this Stableford Competition. I was told a week before that 117 persons had submitted their names, including a number of greenkeepers. Even with these high numbers wishing to play, no one was turned away. On many of the tees, eight golfers were standing at 9am awaiting two loud blasts on the klaxon horn. Golfers with an A on their number played off on the first blast of the horn, then everyone joined in to enjoy this now ever popular family event. Even with the good number of golfers out in every part of the course, there were no hold ups. The course was presented to the highest standard by Kevin Johnson and his greenkeeping staff. I was told that the club members were jubilant with the transformation of the course since Kevin took it in hand just over a year ago. Before the presentation of the Quaich and prizes, we had all the usual niceties of free pints of beer etc. and raffle tickets were given free to let everyone have a chance of winning a prize.

Harry's family were involved in the organisation of the event. "Les Girls" – Harry's daughters and grand-daughters – were to the forefront in assisting with raffle tickets and the distribution of prizes. Two of Harry's brother, Neil and Hugh, were helping with final details before the presentation.

This year, the Quaich was won by K Gimson, J Dewry, Elaine Webster and D Dunlop. Harry's wife, Jessie, presented the Quaich to the winners. They got a small replica each to keep. The trophy stays with the Diamond family, whom I am sure will keep it in excellent order until July '08.

Harry's family wish to thank all the sponsors and those who donated prizes, also those who assisted in organising and running this ever-successful tournament.

Cecil N George