

Back in time

to this month in 1987

BIGGA National Championship Special

Back in time looks back at cuttings of greenkeeping news from days gone-by. 2012 is a landmark year, being the centenary of Greenkeeping Associations, as well as 25 years since BIGGA was formed. Each month we usually look back at the current month, but in a different year, from over the last hundred. In this special feature, however, we are focusing just on the history of October's National Championship, from its conception in 1987, to the present day

Not only is 2012 a milestone as we celebrate 25 years of BIGGA, and the centenary of Greenkeeping Associations, it also marks a quarter of a century of the BIGGA National Championship. This month's 'Back in time' focuses on the competition's longevity...

October 1987 was the month of Michael Fish's notoriously inaccurate statement "there will be no hurricane" – hours before a devastating storm which brought down trees across the UK.

That month's cover of *Greenkeeper International* graphically illustrated this, featuring a photograph of a partially flooded course and a large tree lying horizontal close to the green.

Fortunately, the weather abated for the inaugural event – then called the 'BIGGA Annual Tournament' – at Verulam Golf Club in St Albans, and was proclaimed a "resounding success."

The tournament review stated: "More than seventy greenkeepers turned out over three days to take part over a course kept in fine fettle by head greenkeeper Geoff Smith and his staff."

Black and white images show "some of the competitors and their wives" enjoying the sunshine in front of the clubhouse.

By 1990 the tournament was well-established annually and had already become one of the highlights of the golfing calendar. Competitors basked in "baking sunshine" over three days at Ganton Golf Club in East Yorkshire.

The tournament – now called 'The Hayter Challenge' – celebrated its 10th birthday at the same venue in 1997, and all attendees compli-

mented Head Greenkeeper David Spurden on the outstandingly prepared course.

However, this was totally overshadowed by the tragic news just days later that David had died in a shooting accident on the course.

The turn of the century saw The Charterhouse/Scotts National Championship held at the venue for this year's Open Championship, Lytham St Annes. Emerging triumphant from an extremely challenging course, and defying wet conditions, was 'Rain Man' Dustin Houghton from Seaford Head in East Sussex.

The 20th event was held across two venues – Dundonald Links and Kilmarnock Barassie, with David Simpson from Crieff Golf Club earning the title of BIGGA National Champion.

As the years have rolled by the championship has retained its huge popularity and prominence. 2010's tournament took place at the spectacular surroundings of The Berkshire and featured a similarly spectacular prize.

Any holes in one on the 10th (Blue course) or the 16th (Red course) would scoop a £20,000 Mini Clubman courtesy of Rigby Taylor.

Unfortunately, this went unclaimed despite "some gallant efforts".

This brings us to last year's event, held at West Lancs, and the current championship holder Jason Hunt from Addington Palace Golf Club near Croydon.

The 2012 National Championship, sponsored by Charterhouse and Kubota, will be held at Irvine Golf Club in Scotland on 8 and 9 October.

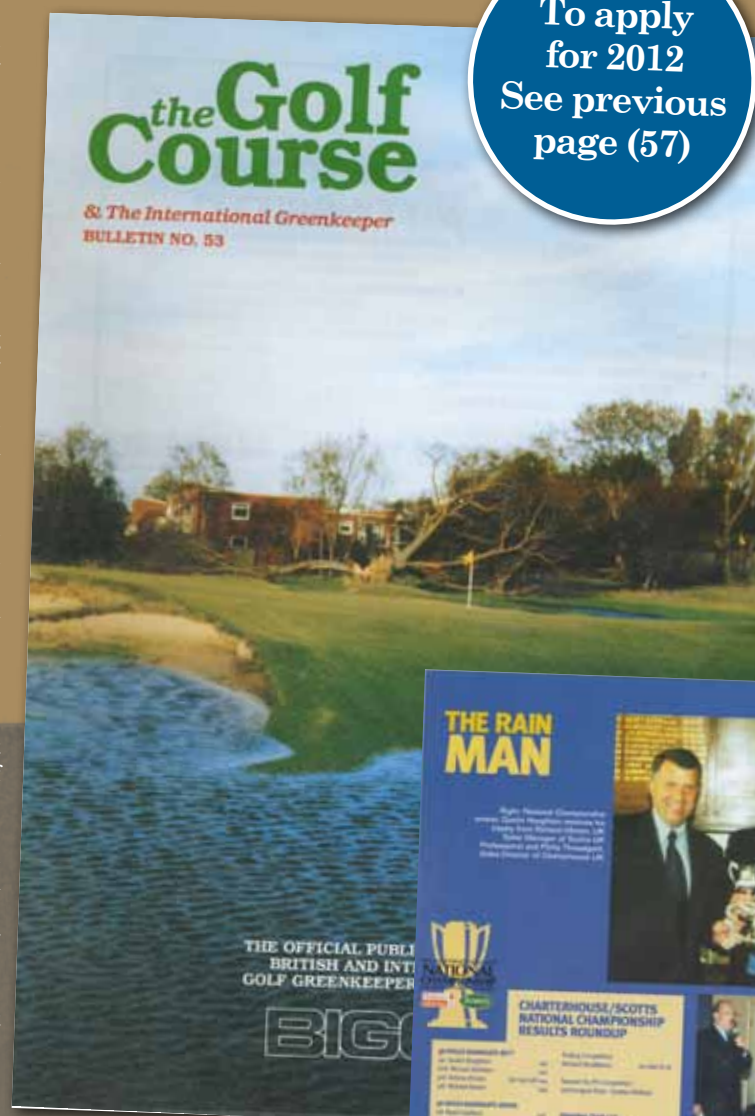
Do you have any old artifacts from days gone-by?

Perhaps your grandad was a greenkeeper and has something stored away in the loft? Maybe an Association tie, or a journal? If so we would love to hear from you. We are particularly interested in the early part of the last century but anything you have would be worth considering for future editions of this article.

Please contact us on 01347 833800 or email Elliott Small, BIGGA Past Chairman,

elliott.edna@hotmail.co.uk

To apply for 2012 See previous page (57)



As you will have seen in the last issue, the club celebrates its 125th anniversary so it should be a particularly special couple of days – keep an eye out for the November issue to find out the winner of the coveted prize.

Survival of the fittest



Jason Hunt coped with the exacting conditions best of all to become BIGGA's 2011 Champion Golfer

The BIGGA National Championship 2011 is sponsored by Charterhouse and Kubota



The wind was blowing hard and the formidable West Lanes course was having its considerable teeth, but one man stood firm to clinch the 2011 BIGGA National Golf Championship, sponsored by Charterhouse and Kubota.

Jason Hunt, a 29-year-old Assistant at Addington Palace Golf Club, near Croydon, kept his cool and carefully two putted the final hole for a single shot victory and the biggest win of his golfing career. "I have won a few Open tournaments but the quality of the field here makes this the biggest win I've had," explained Jason, for whom it was the culmination of a fine year which has seen his handicap drop from two to scratch.

"These were the toughest conditions I've ever faced in a top tournament and it is one of the hardest courses I've played. I had to strap for every par," he revealed.

"I had it in mind that it was between our three ball on the second day, me, Garry Duncan, from Carnoustie, and Kevin Boodle, from Guildford. Kevin had a good front nine and was in front at that stage, but Garry was leading by the back nine. I just hung in and on the final green I thought I might have two for it and that proved correct," said Jason, who is self-taught, and who has never changed from the left hand below right grip he adopted when he took up the game.

The opening round was perhaps the difference when, in calmer conditions Jason shot a two over par 74 to hold the clubhouse lead by a single shot from Kevin, and two from Garry. It proved to be the difference when both Jason and Kevin shot 79s on the second round and Garry, dropping a few shots in the closing holes, shot 80 to complete the first second and third in the main competition.

"I thought West Lanes was a fantastic golf course and in superb condition. I'm looking forward to going to Scotland next year to defend my title at Irvine Duneside," said Jason.

"I'd like to thank West Lanes Golf Club, BIGGA and our sponsors, Charterhouse and Kubota, for making it such a wonderful event."

The handicap competition for the BIGGA Challenge Cup produced some real fireworks and one has to feel a little sorry for Mark Tucker, of Saunton Golf Club, who finished third, but had the same 151 score as Mark Blacknell and Gary Burgess.

He did lose out though to two players who, remarkably, both holed 4-irons during their second rounds.

Gary was the most spectacular as it produced that rarest of birds, an albatross! The Grange Park man, had exactly 200 yards to go on the 478 yard 5th hole and his 4-iron was pinpoint accurate.

"I watched it all the way and thought I saw it drop in but you can never be sure from that distance," said Gary, a three handicapper, for whom, needless to say, it was his first ever allstroke.

Mark Blacknell, who won the BIGGA Challenge Cup, was in a purple patch when he arrived at West Lanes, having just won his Club Championship at Leen Valley, but he could not have expected how his 36 holes would pan out.

The 5 handicapper shot a 10 over par 82 on the first day, without making a birdie, but when he set out on the windy second round he soon made up for it.

A 6-iron to eight inches on the



BIGGA ANNUAL TOURNEY A GREAT SUCCESS



Some of the competitors and their wives enjoying the sunshine in front of Vero's clubhouse.

Annual... at Albans... was a... green-... three... course... heat... and... den with... which were... rman of... es. Mr... a keen... is. The... fated by... (Ford UK... Materials... Baker... in Strutt... ans, SWS,

Sports Turf Institute, 5Al Long Life, T F Parker of Worcester Park, the Golf Course, Golf Landscapes Ltd, Husleys, Brian D Pierson (Contractors), Digby Taylor, Farmura Ltd, DASF UIL, Lloyd's of Letchworth, Synchemicals, CMW Equipment, Kingston House (Mowers) Ltd and A T Oliver & Sons.

The greenkeeper's team for the 1987 Kubota Challenge, being held at The Belfry this month, was announced at the end of the tournament - the qualifiers being the first eight over 54 holes.

The team consists of - P. Wentworth (Handicap 14), I. Toon (9), E. West (9), M. Guy (6), R. Barker (5), N. Whittaker (16), G. Payne (7) and M. Sheehan (7).

MAJOR PRIZEWINNERS

18 HOLE NET GROSS DASH
1st J. Toon, 60
2nd P. Wentworth, 67
3rd G. Payne, 66
4th D. Roberts, 98

Over 60's
1st R. Barker, 73
2nd E. Thompson, 79
3rd N. Gales, 90

90 HOLE SCRATCH
1st Barker, 149

90 HOLE NET (9-11)
1st J. Toon, 139
2nd M. Guy, 140
3rd M. Sheehan, 141
4th M. Smith, 142

90 HOLE NET (12-14)
1st D. Roberts, 138
2nd P. Wentworth, 140
3rd N. Whittaker, 148
4th J. Barker, 146

JURIES CUP (3-A-SIDE TEAM)
Northants, 423
- M. Guy, D. Roberts, J. Barker

CHIEFMAN UNDER "29" CUP
R. Barker, 146

18 HOLE NET
1st M. Smith, 65
2nd J. Barker, 66
3rd J. Toon, 65
4th M. Guy, 67

PART CHAIRMAN'S CUP
D. Roberts, 146

90 HOLE PUTTING COMPETITION
P. Wentworth

BIGGA NATIONAL TOURNAMENT

BIGGA NATIONAL TOURNAMENT . . . BIGGA

David Wood's 61 proves too hot to handle



All set for the trophy table laden with "goodies" awaits the lucky winners.

I wasn't just the sun that burnt up the August Ganton course at the year's BIGGA National 54 hole Tournament. David Wood set the course alight with a second day net 61 (gross 75) to scoop the Maxwell Hart 18 hole medal play prize, easily eclipsing Mark Lawren's score 69 and Dick Murtigh's 69.

A modest David gave credit to the course for his marvellous score. "The greens really keep you on the forefoot, you just haven't play a fast shot off the tee."

"And with the fairways so fast and the greens muzzing this everything just seemed to come off. I didn't miss a putt."

Home course head greenkeeper David Spurlin produced Ganton in top con-

dition, it had both commented on and appreciated by everyone's hard enough to tackle it. David also did himself great credit returning net rounds of 77, 72, and

Greenkeeping Management's Editor MIKE MCLENNAN, reports on the year's BIGGA National Tournament held at Ganton Golf Club, East Yorkshire, a tough, uncompromising but beautiful venue.

80 to put him well up on the leader board at 229.

Ganton's sunbaked the stability East Yorkshire venue, but a scorching breeze just managed to prevent the 83

competitors' heaters overheating completely. A cold beer afterwards in the clubhouse also did wonders!

"One set of delicate stemware brought from the head waters tournament" was, perhaps - BIGGA Executive Director Neil Thomas, Chairman for Scores and Education Officer, David Dunning.

An eleven day to keep the tournament kicking over in a calm and organised fashion. At credit too to the local Rawlins boys who mowed the most impor-

tant. See Page 13



HEAT UP... David Wood collects the Maxwell Hart Trophy and Pennington Cup from BIGGA Chairman Ivor Scores.



Mark Diment puts up the William Hargreaves (SWS) Trophy from Terry Dickinson.

Photographs by Alan Birch