

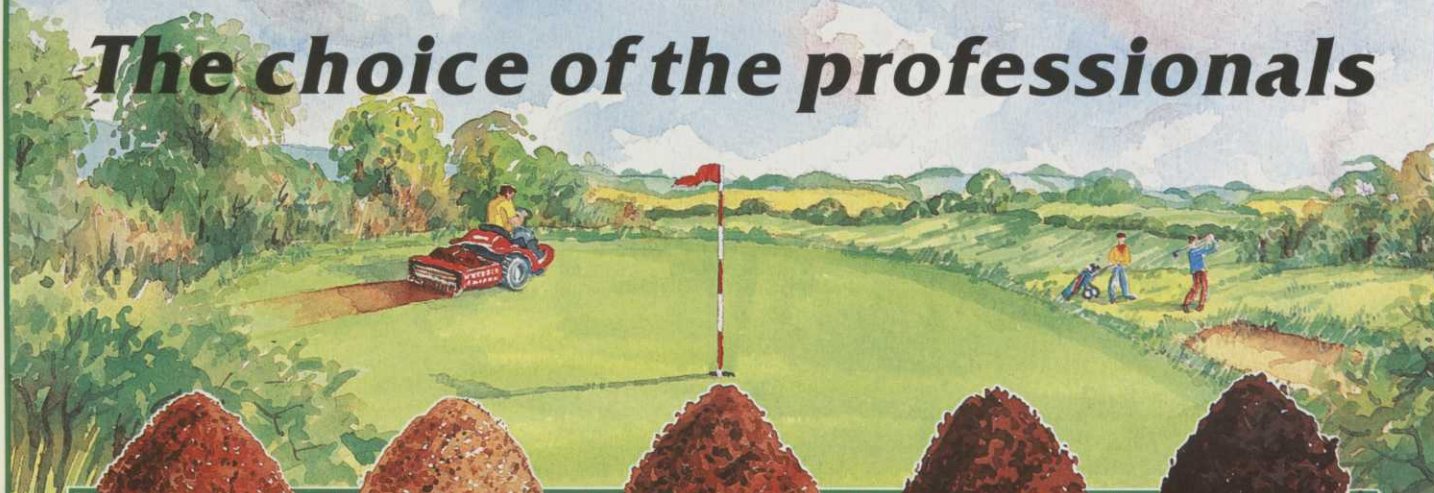
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JANUARY/FEBRUARY 1991



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GREENKEEPER

International

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Native grasses frame the par-four 13th, at the spectacular Ocean Course in South Carolina.

WELCOME TO GREENKEEPER *International*

**From The Rt. Hon.
Viscount Whitelaw
K.T., C.H., M.C., D.L.**

As we enter 1991 I am delighted to learn that BIGGA will now be producing its new 'in-house' publication, appropriately titled 'Greenkeeper International'. A members' magazine is most important for all greenkeeping personnel, for it is the Association's main means of communication with its membership.

It should enable members to keep abreast of developments throughout the profession and, equally important, keep members informed on key educational issues and proposals.

This is vital in terms of providing opportunities for course managers and greenkeepers to gain the qualifications and undergo training which will be essential to a successful future, both for themselves and for their chosen profession.

A highly professional team has been brought together to produce the new magazine, with an emphasis on quality of production and content. Do remember that this is your publication and your contributions will be vital to its success. Do not be afraid to voice your opinions, for there are many problems facing the profession and these should be aired through the columns of the magazine.

Approached constructively, I am sure there will subsequently be a much greater awareness and understanding of these problems within the game of golf in its wider aspects.



Your Association has made great progress in the last three years and greenkeepers now have a truly professional body to represent them. Nevertheless there remains much work to be done and for your part you should encourage many more greenkeepers to join and thus strengthen still further the power of the Association.

I shall look forward to reading the new magazine and to seeing it contribute in a positive manner to the further enhancement of BIGGA's standing within the game. I wish 'Greenkeeper

International' every success.

Neil Thomas, BIGGA's Executive Director comments:

Many members will be aware of the increasing problems experienced in recent months with the production and quality of the Association's magazine. Your Board of Management was faced with a number of serious matters relating to the magazine and, with the best interests of the membership in mind, a decision was made in December to terminate arrangements with the then publishers.

Furthermore, the Board resolved to produce its own 'in-house' publication under the all embracing title of 'Greenkeeper International', this to be produced with a solid emphasis on editorial content and concentrating on quality rather than pure size.

A highly professional team has been brought together, with advertising under

the control of Bill Lynch and Carol Dutton. Both had worked on the previous magazine and are now established as staff members of the Association. Another name familiar to many from earlier days is David White, who needed little tempting to return as our new editor.

Production will be the responsibility of Tim Moat of Headline Communications, York. Tim's company has produced many of our Association publications and is noted for its experience in magazine production.

This first issue of 'Greenkeeper International' is a joint edition covering January and February and we shall revert to our normal monthly formula with the next issue in March.

These have been exceptionally busy times for us at head office, though the adrenaline generated in producing this first issue has given us all great enthusiasm and the urge to go forward with publishing what is - in a very real sense - BIGGA's 'own' magazine.

Please take note of your President's message, for your contributions will be vital to the magazine's success. We look forward to hearing your views of this first issue - be they on design, quality or content.



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Flying Divots

France's inland revenue service to set golf tax?

In France, the fact that golf is played mainly by wealthy A B socio-economic classes, has been quickly recognised by the ever-grabbing French equivalent of our own Inland Revenue.

There is a proposal before their Government to impose a tax on expenditure incurred in playing golf. The elements of the declared expenditure would be subscriptions, travel, equipment and 'nineteenth hole' imbibing. In fact, all outgoings in connection with participation in the game. Suspect declarations are anticipated, for with only some checkable, eg subscriptions, the rest will be on trust. The degree of trust demonstrated by the French tax collector is craftily contained in the proposal: "when a golfer's expense declaration is submitted, the department will double it..."

United States go from course to course

It's no secret that Americans are building new courses at a rate which leaves Europeans staggering.

Over 300 were actually opened for play in 1990, with close on 200 more nearing completion and a further 200 in an advanced planning stage. Despite gloomy world recession forecasts there seems to be no shortage of funds, especially for US resort course developments, where the cost of play is not nearly as high as many would have us believe.

It therefore comes as no surprise to learn that the USGA Green Section are launching a \$2.8million research programme directed at coming to grips with anticipated environmental problems and in producing a cheaper and more durable turf. It is also declared, in a recent U.S. report on world golf, that golf is booming at a far higher rate in Europe.

Britain's prospective developers, especially those in the tardy public sector, should now be addressing the escalating access to play problem, for if building programmes are ignored, shelved, or pitifully undercapitalised, the bubble here will surely burst.

Fulford's poplars to be felled

One of European golf's landmarks is set to disappear very soon.

The line of 68 poplar trees, widely seen and always admired on TV whenever the Benson & Hedges International Open was held at the Fulford, York venue,

GREAT NUMBER PLATE GAME

The lengths some people will go to 'enrich' their cars with personal number plates seem to know no bounds.

Numbers like A1 or RR1 command six figure price tags and even, Heaven forbid, such unlikely items as E L V I S or R O B I N have prices more akin to works of art than mere registration plates.

The practice is now officially encouraged by the Department of Transport. We were amused to see in The Times recently that registration B I G G A was for sale... at only £10,000! You'll be pleased to know that the official coffers remained firmly locked.

are scheduled to be felled.

The Lombardy poplars, planted in 1935 and now some 120 feet high, are to the left of the first fairway, visible for miles around the course in Heslington, a village on York's outskirts.

Two of the trees snapped off near the base in high winds earlier this year, leading to a survey being carried out and advice given by an arboricultural expert.

Each tree was drilled, with 21 being found sound, 28 in a primary state of disease and 19 totally rotten.

Consideration was given to having the trees pollarded to a height of about 20 feet, but, after assimilating further expert information and advice, the Fulford Committee has decided to have them all felled, at a cost of around £6,000.

A Committee spokesman said, 'A lot of us find it very sad, but I am afraid it is inevitable. When poplars are planted it is as certain as night follows day that about sixty years later they get rotten and have to be removed.

'We have yet to decide which type of trees will replace them, but poplars are out, as a future Committee in 60 years time would be faced with the same problem'.

Where brown is just beautiful

At the rather grandiose and somewhat pompously self-titled 'Golf Summit '90' held in California (where else?) recently, it seems that some of the authors of golf course generated wealth and opulence – the architects – are having second thoughts.

Citing the high costs of golf in Japan – up to £260 per round – and the average costs of construction of new courses in America at over £2.84million – not including such 'necessities' as clubhouse and amenities – the architect Perry Dye, son of notable Pete and Alice, has suggested that a move away from green is a good way to rein in the escalating charges levied at the public.

'It's time for golfers to wake up,' says Dye. 'Brown is beautiful and always has been. The great Scottish links are as brown as it gets. We as golf leaders need to go back and talk brown. We need to talk about our environment – something we haven't done in 20 years.

'We should start in the direction of less water and less chemicals as soon as possible. Get to moving the ball over to better turf and play winter rules in lieu of what we can do to the environment to keep grass green. The change must come from within the industry.'

We are not sure of the GCSAA view to such comments, wise though they may be, for the American greenkeepers have long advocated as an official association policy: 'keep courses green.'

East meets west on the course, but cold war remains for would-be Russian golfers

Those pukka Californian wheeler-dealers get everywhere, though I doubt if they could have imagined the vast amount of Soviet red-tape that needed trimming before the long overdue Moscow Golf & Country Club could become a reality.

No less than fifteen years in the making, after numerous false starts, the course is at last scheduled to open in 1992 – to foreigners only!

Charismatic Boris Yeltsin has lobbied long and hard for more sporting facilities in the capital and will no doubt be frustrated by the decision taken to ban play to local citizens, a miserly touch no doubt cooked-up by the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Californian company, American International Golf

Resorts Inc., jointly concerned in the venture.

The 6,600 yard course, designed way back in the mid-70s by Robert Trent Jones II, is being financed by the Californian group and a consortium of investors and will include a huge hotel and a clutch of swanky villas.

The whisper in official circles is that some 75 per cent of western multi-national firms with Russian interests are putting up the cash, prompted perhaps by the distinct lack of recreational facilities available for foreigners in the capital.

Nevertheless, our sympathies lie with poor old Ivan, who must wait in vain for a chance to join the golfing jet-set.



North Scotland section members, still cherishing fond memories of a fine day of golf when they played their Autumn Outing at an immaculate Turriff Golf Club in mid September, were horrified to learn that on the morning of September 29th the River Deveron, which adjoins the Turriff course, rose and fell in a flash flood which at its height was 13" above normal, and at its highest level for 32 years.

At 5m the menacing roar of the river in full flood could be heard, even in the distant town of Turriff, heralding a trail of devastation that included the loss of 64 sheep from the fields up stream from the golf course.

Hay bales, trees, debris and livestock were flushed away in the ripstream as the river banks disappeared and within no time at all eight greens on the course were under water.

That the course was only closed for eight days speaks volumes for the fine work carried out by head greenkeeper George Geddes and his staff who, when faced with the mammoth task of clearing trees, branches, silt and a particularly nasty tide mark of straw and mud, came through with flying colours. A month later only the heavily silted 14th green – pictured above just after the disaster – remained unplayable.

BIGGA/ICI Premier Greenkeeper of the Year is announced

And so it came about, on the first Monday of December, seven tried and trusted men, all good and true, arrived at Aldwark Manor knowing that only one last test remained before one of their number would be awarded the coveted title of 'BIGGA / ICI PREMIER GREENKEEPER OF THE YEAR', together with an all



Roger Mossop, Marketing Manager of ICI Professional Products, left, presents Anthony Davies with the ICI Premier Greenkeeper of the Year Award. BIGGA Chairman Ivor Scoones looks on.

expenses paid trip to attend the GCSAA Convention and Trade Show in Las Vegas in February 1991.

Since the early spring of 1990, following a sponsorship incentive from ICI Professional Products, BIGGA members had been competing for the title of the UK's Premier Greenkeeper.

The competition, which was in three stages, was well supported by greenkeepers from across the regions, with the basis of the award being submission of a paper of up to 3,000 words entitled 'A Year in the Life of My Golf Course'. A panel of experts drawn from BIGGA and ICI selected the seven greenkeepers who submitted the best papers; and arrangements were made to visit their courses to assess both course presentation and management. These assessment visits, undertaken by Jack McMillan and ICI's Patrick Goldsworthy were, to the greenkeepers surprise and some apprehension, undertaken without the greenkeeper in attendance.

Now to the final hurdle, a testing personal interview before a panel of experts comprising John Millen, Chairman, BIGGA Education Sub Committee, The Executive Director, Neil Thomas, Jack McMillan, Golf Course Consultant, and ICI's Professional Products Technical Manager, Patrick Goldsworthy. The interview stage was tense indeed, with each candidate being quizzed for over thirty minutes on a wide

range of technical, commercial and general industry topics. The quality of candidates was so high that making the final selection was a near impossible task, for the marks from stages one and two were so close as to make the interview crucial to the result.

Ultimately the winner was selected and the runners-up decided, the judges final decision being based on the total marks achieved in each of the three stages. The final criteria in making judgement was for a candidate who offered a wide range of skills not only in the technical knowledge of greenkeeping and course management but also the skills of man management, leadership and team building. These qualities, coupled with abilities in long term planning, presentation and communication, together with a caring feeling for the environment, indicated that Anthony Davies, Head Greenkeeper at Prestbury Golf Club in Cheshire best fitted the criteria and he was declared the worthy winner.

Second place was awarded to Martin Jones, Course Manager at Tadmerton Heath Golf Club, with Kerran Daly, Course Manager at Salisbury and South Wiltshire Golf Club a close placed third.

The remaining candidates, Bernard Findlay, Portstewart Golf Club; Richard Barker, Kirby Muxloe Golf Club; Hamish Brough, Broomieknowle Golf Club and Nigel Potter, Saddleworth Golf Club were all awarded equal runner-up places.

All the awards were made following a presentation dinner at which BIGGA Chairman, Ivor Scoones, before the presentation ceremony said the award 'will come to represent an important aspect of BIGGA's educational programme.'

'It is clear that the high standards demonstrated at today's interviews are an indication of the improving quality of greenkeeper education. BIGGA's priority is the education and training of greenkeepers and much effort has been directed in the last three years towards improving standards, with the help of our approved colleges.'

In responding to Ivor Scoones' comments, Roger Mossop said, 'We strongly support the industry through sponsorship in the belief that a company should put back into industry a significant proportion of that which it takes out, particularly in the area of education and training.'

Roger Mossop presented Jack McMillan with the ICI Annual Award made to individuals who have made an outstanding contribution to the industry.

Richard Fry

● Entry forms are now available for the 1991 ICI Premier Greenkeeper of the Year Award.

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