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Season's Greetings!



Official publication of the British & International Golf Greenkeepers Association
DECEMBER 1992

GREENKEEPER

International

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COVER PICTURE:

Prince Andrew, BTME's extra special VIP guest, due to open the event of the year on January 20.



Take a closer look at what Greenkeeper

International can do to promote YOUR business

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Find out more:

call Bill Lynch on 091 413 7218, Carol Dutton on 0207 570117 or BIGGA HQ on 03473 581



The BIGGA Turf Management Exhibition and Seminar Programme is now only weeks away. Contact Debbie Savage straight away on 03473 581 and find out how your company can still take part.

Greenkeeper Education and Development Fund

Launched by Viscount Whitelaw at BTME 1992, the Fund provides the key to the future for greenkeeper, golf club and game. Individuals and companies can join the Golden Key Circle and Silver Key Circle. For details, contact BIGGA on 03473 581.

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Sample the Sun,

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in Anaheim and
San Diego, California, whilst attending the

GCSAA CONFERENCE AND SHOW 1993

TRAVEL WITH BIGGA to the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America's prestigious annual Conference and Show next January – and while you're there, enjoy the holiday of a lifetime!

If you're ready to catch the magic, Anaheim, California, is ready for you! BIGGA has this year joined forces with Thomas Cook to transport you to 'the Magic Kingdom', with the option of a four day trip to San Diego after the GCSAA Conference – sun, sand and surf!

We have this year chosen two outstanding luxury hotels:

◆ **The Anaheim Hilton and Towers**, a superior first class hotel, is situated 50 feet from the Anaheim Convention Center and two blocks from Disneyland. Guest rooms have climate control, colour cable TV and radio. There is an outdoor heated pool and four jacuzzis, full health club with sauna, massage, tanning beds, steam room, exercise equipment and aerobics, games room, and beauty salon. There's also a vast range of entertainment and dining facilities – sample Italian, Japanese and of course Californian cuisine.

◆ **The Hyatt Islandia**, another superior first class hotel in San Diego, located on Mission Bay. Guest rooms are air-conditioned with private bath, remote-control colour cable TV, radio and phone. The Islandia Bar and Grill offers fine Mediterranean cuisine with bay views at lunch, dinner and Sunday brunch. There is a heated outdoor pool, whirlpool, tennis courts, sail boat rentals, windsurfing, water-skiing, snorkeling, scuba diving and parasailing and whale watching (in season!).

Details of the GCSAA programme will be available from headquarters at a later date.

◆ Package 1

25th January to 5th February 1993

London Gatwick/Los Angeles on Virgin

Atlantic – 25th January

Transfer to Anaheim Hilton

6 nights Anaheim Hilton – 25th January-

31st January

Transfer to San Diego – 31st January

4 nights Hyatt Islandia – 31st January-

4th February

Transfer to Los Angeles Airport

Los Angeles/Gatwick on Virgin Atlantic –

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Cost: Twin Room £842 per person

Cost: Single Room £1,266 per person

◆ Package 2

25th January to 1st February 1993

London Gatwick/Los Angeles on Virgin

Atlantic – 25th January

Transfer to Anaheim Hilton

7 nights Anaheim Hilton – 25th January-

1st February

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Los Angeles/Gatwick on Virgin Atlantic –

1st February (to arrive in UK on 2nd)

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LETTERS

Write to the editor,
Greenkeeper International, 13 Firlie Close, Seaford, East Sussex BN25 2HL

■ Quite the most rewarding part of the BIGGA S.W. Region seminar at Cannington College on 3 November was the professional contribution to the proceedings by three young men, giving maiden speeches and speaking with assurance and expertise on such varying subjects. Neil Macintyre spoke on reducing the effects of winter wear on courses, Jason Hampton on educating the members in understanding the greenkeepers' problems, and Guy Woods on how he reclaimed his downland course from the vicious spiral of 'high phosphate fertilisers and an inefficient three head irrigation system', and is now well on the way to restoring it to its old quality.

All good interesting material, well thought out and spoken with conviction. We need more of this – shaming those 'professional' speakers who insult their audiences by reading out text from slides, stuff which all but the novices have learned long ago, or is frankly wrong!

At Cirencester, by far the best talks (Jon Allbutt excepted) were by senior greenkeepers. Good on you – we need more of this and less of the other!

Congratulations, Gordon Child, on a very good seminar and congratulations also to his three young men, from whom not even a memorable contribution on golf architecture by Donald Steel could steal the show.

JIM ARTHUR, B.Sc.(AGRIC).

Budleigh Salterton, E.Devon

■ I have read your magazine for some time now – in an unofficial capacity – and enjoy the many interesting articles. Rarely, it seems, it is read by those employed to look after the interests of Birmingham's municipal golf courses, judging by the widespread and long-standing frustration of those who 'pay to play' these courses. Such frustration was raised as recently as the Birmingham Alliance Public Golf Course Club's Captains Day in September and voiced again at their recent quarterly general meeting. Their reaction to an apparent non-existent greenkeeping policy should be understood

by your goodself.

Teas, greens, bunkers, fairways – without exception all suffer from the malaise of poor husbandry in varying degrees. Members at my own club, Boldmore, have endured long standing 'placing' of the ball, due to soggy fairways below water tables, our two lakes often awash with dead fish and effluent. We are told that necessary plant to clear blocked and neglected ditches cannot get on the course, due to these dreadful ground conditions. Yarrow, clover, daisies and moss all invade the course and have done so for years as the greens and tees decline – it is terrible to witness.

If any members of your Association work on these public courses I suggest they are a disgrace to the high ideals of such a professional body. Incompetence reigns alongside apathy – even simple 'swishing' of greens in now disregarded, allowing fusarium to become established, and there is clover, moss and yarrow on greens and bunker edges. The entire course is a disgrace, with real rough a mere pace from the putting surfaces – I am not joking!

The public courses in Birmingham are testimony to poor management and a lack of correct work procedures: seeding of fairways or tees – forget it! Repairs to areas worn by tractors and trailers – forget it! Consistent greens – a laugh! Grass on tees – find a place in the mud and allow for two inches of yellowing grass!

Please, through the pages of your magazine, help us to bring these courses into the spotlight.

JOHN TURNER

President, Boldmere Golf Club,
Sutton Coldfield.

• My understanding is that Birmingham City Council use outside contractors for sport and leisure management, which under CCT has the worst national failure rate of any service. With councils keen on privatisation in the vanguard, private firms won 41% of such contracts. However, according to statistics published in March, 37% went bust or were sacked, and a further 7% have had problems. There have been no in-house failures reported. – editor.

■ Peter Solski, just days after returning from a detailed first aid course staged at Aldwark Manor, was able to put his new skills to the acid test. Peter's ten year old son was found choking, face turning blue and seconds away from unconsciousness. 'You never know when such an emergency might arise', said Peter, 'but I do know that before acquiring first aid skills I would have panicked – as it was, I fell easily into action and was able to save my son from what might have been a disaster'.



■ Chigwell man, Richard Heaslip, has been appointed head greenkeeper at Epping Forest G&CC, his task to grow in and maintain the recently added 18 hole Championship course. Richard joins Epping Forest after 30 years at the very popular Hainault Forest municipal course. There he gained considerable experience maintaining the 36 holes which are estimated to take 140,000 rounds a year. In his spare time Richard's main passion is restoring old motorcycles and the pride of his collection is a 1947 Scott Flying Squirrel.

■ Rolawn has re-organised its management structure, with sales and marketing roles combined under Terry Ryan, who has joined Rolawn from a career in building materials distribution. He takes up the new post of general manager (sales), replacing directors, Rachel Semlyen and Guy Longbottom. In a statement issued by Ken Dawson, founder and MD, he said, 'Both Rachel and Guy have a record of achievement and innovation with the company and have played key roles in the development of Rolawn into a nationwide and European business. I am pleased to say that in an independent capacity they very much intend to continue to be associated with the company'.

■ Mike Lincoln-Smith has been appointed as sales territory manager for Hayter Beaver in East Anglia and the London area, responsible for promoting the company's range of professional grass cutting equipment. Already a familiar face in the industry, Mike is a member of BIGGA and worked for ten years with Turner International and for the last six years with Ransomes.

■ My spies tell me that Jon Allbutt has taken up golf. The southpaw consultant lecturer was seen recently taking lessons from the pro at Aldwark Manor and is quoted as having a 'picture swing' – which picture I wonder, 'Nightmare Alley'?

■ A world first has been achieved in the construction of the newly opened Slinfold Park G&CC in West Sussex. Incorporating a members-only 18 hole course together with a pay-and-play nine hole course and driving range, Slinfold Park's nine hole course is the first to install the Netlon Advanced Turf System on all tees and greens. In addition, the superior grass establishment afforded by Netlon Advanced Turf has enabled the nine-hole public course to be opened less than a year after construction work began. The members only course, which also has Netlon Advanced Turf tees, will be completed soon.

■ One of the six winners of Barenbrug's competition to identify a number of common grass species, recently staged at the IoG show, was Mike Mercer, head greenkeeper at Southport & Ainsdale GC. Richard Aitken of Aitken's Sportsturf in North Yorkshire and Richard Aitken (Seedsmen) in Glasgow presented the prize of a magnum of champagne to Mike at the regional IoG exhibition at Haydock. Southport



Hello!... that the sheds?... to whom am I speaking?... head what? greenkeeper?... ah yes... do the gard'ning here don'cha? Listen!, this is wing-commander Blagshaw speaking from the bar... can't find anyone from the clubhouse... must be a bit of a flap on... Anyway, there's a little chap turned up... wants to pay you chaps a visit,..... who is he?... dunno... outlandish type though... ruddy great beard, jolly face, wears big fancy wellies, and arrived driving a real flashy job!.... Says he wants to come down to the sheds and "make your wishes come true"..... Can you guess who the blighter is?... what? no, no, no, look here,.... don't upset yourself old boy, I give you my word!, it definitely is **not** another agronomist!.... no, of course not!... Look here, I sit him down with a large G+T, a you come up and have a decko hm?... look here old fella, do calm down... take some long deep breaths.... get a hold of yourself man!.....hello?!

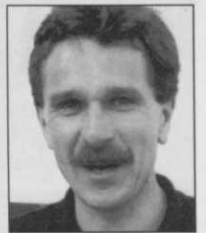
GC is a long standing customer of Aitken Sportsturf, which distributes Barenbrug's quality grass seeds throughout the North of England and Scotland.

■ The 1992 winner of the Kubota (UK) Cup for best machinery student at Lancashire College of Agriculture is 23 year old Peter John Bradburn. He is pictured receiving his prize at the colleges' annual award ceremony from Russell Mellor, Kubota's Northern Region sales manager. A student on the National Diploma in Turf Science and Sportsground Management, Peter received a distinction following a three year full time course at the college.

■ In a year of recession, Lloyds of Letchworth Ltd has not only introduced a new and expanded product range, they have also strengthened their sales force. The latest representative to join the company is Gwilym Thomas, whose new territory includes the south of England and Wales. His appointment finalises Lloyds' plan to have total coverage of the UK.

■ Kubota (UK) Ltd. has appointed Stephen Gooch as the new Northern Region demonstrator.

Operating from the Kubota unit at the Lancashire College of Agriculture, Stephen will work across the Northern counties demonstrating Kubota's tractor and power product ranges. Prior to joining Kubota, Stephen was a head groundsman and greenkeeper, involved in the care of cricket, rugby and football pitches, together with a bowling green, tennis courts and a golf course.



■ David Stansfield, B.Sc., senior agronomist with the STRI for some 15 years, is leaving the Institute on 31 January and will join Professional Sportsturf Design Associates to set up and run a golf-only advisory service. David is best known for his work as the consultant agronomist to the R&A Championship Committee, a task he has tackled with great professionalism over the past five Open Championships.

GREENKEEPERS

TRAINING COMMITTEE

Surely the best way to invest in the future is to invest in people. Training and education are the greatest motivating factors. A more articulate and educated workforce will inevitably lead to greater rewards and an awareness and recognition of the greenkeepers profession

The Greenkeepers Training Scheme has appointed 13 colleges in Britain and Ireland as Centres of Excellence for Golf Greenkeeper Training, at Craft Supervisory and Management levels.

Langside College
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David Blackmur

Fund's success means two new projects in 1993

Berks, Bucks and Oxon and South Coast are the latest Sections to contribute to the Education and Development Fund. Cheques for £300 and £100 respectively confirm the trend for Regions and Sections to make contributions to a fund which has been successfully established during 1992.

Executive Director Neil Thomas commented: "I am particularly pleased to receive these contribu-



tions which show the determination at local level to support a fund with the specific purpose of

increasing and improving the educational and training opportunities available to greenkeepers."

Confirming that the fund has passed the £60,000 mark during 1992, Neil Thomas added: "The response from the industry and our members has enabled the Board of Management to proceed with two major projects during 1993. The production of a career video is much needed and will be targeted at schools and colleges to

attract new recruits and to disseminate knowledge of the profession of greenkeeping. The establishing of a Scholarship Awards Scheme will enable the Association to offer financial support to selected student during their college courses. Both initiatives are exciting and a further example of BIGGA's commitment to educational and training programmes and the furtherance of the profession."

FLYING DIVOTS

The way it used to be

*I were here afore seven this mornin'
Cuttin' the greens at first light
An' somewhere a sky lark were singin'
An' nary a member in sight!*

*In a lifetime of shovin' this mower
I must 'ave walked ten thousand mile
But I backlapped the bitch Monday evenin'
An' this mornin' she's cuttin' in style*

*You can't beat a pram-handle Certes
On dry turf rollin' along
With the bent flyin' clean to the grass-box
An' her cylinder hummin' its song.*

*There's our Dick down there on the fairway
I dunno what goes on in 'is mind
Up an' down up an' down on the Ransomes
Starin' down at 'is 'oss's behind*

*An' ol' Joe's changin' 'oles on the seventh
Then 'e'll be cuttin' the tees
Ten hours with a Lloyds Pennsylvania
By dusk 'e'll be down on 'is knees!*

*Thirty year its bin sin' I started
Ol' 'Arry were greenkeeper then
An' 'e were a right 'oly terror
Though always right fair with 'is men*

*'E started me rakin' the bunkers
When I were a lad twelve year old
An' grubbin' up weeds in all weathers
Come December by God it were cold!*

*Still the Club's paid me regular wages
An' I'd die in the mine or the mill
There must be summat about it
For me to be slavin' 'ere still.*

*For it's grand in the sun in the summer
Satisfyin', if you know what I mean
If you don't mind that toffee nosed tyrant
As calls hissself chairman o' green.*

*'E can't tell 'is grass from 'is elbow
'E can't tell a green from a tee
But 'e thinks 'e's God of this golf course
When the only God round 'ere is me.*

C D R SNAVE



BIGGA stalwarts discover they were brothers in arms



Bert Cross



Gordon Child

Two high profile BIGGA members met again at the Iseki finals and fell to reminiscing about 'the good old days'. Imagine the surprise of Bert Cross and Gordon Child when they discovered they had both joined The Kings Regiment on the same day, subsequently travelling on the same ship to the same Korean wartime destination. Gordon recalled seeing Bert stretchered off at Suez, suffering from appendicitis, though he didn't know who the invalid was! Gordon was in 'D' and Bert in 'C' Company, within a block of each other throughout the whole conflict. Recalling basic training, Bert remembered how peeved the boys were when Gordon, in the armed forces for just three weeks, was given three days leave to play cricket for Yorkshire - 'what a jammy devil' being the obvious comment!

The naked truth

Paul Worster, head greenkeeper at Minchinhampton, tells an amusing story which, though not strictly greenkeeping, is along similar lines: 'My sister runs an estate agents' office in Wiltshire. During the spring, a secluded country cottage came onto their books, the very private garden contained many rare plants and flowers. My sister, realising the potential of the garden, recommended to the executors that the garden be maintained prior to the sale, to maintain the value of the property. This was agreed and a contract placed with a local garden maintenance company.

Some weeks later, on a hot sunny day, my sister was showing a prospect over the property. Standing in a room overlooking the sheltered garden, she was running through the usual sales patter about how one could enjoy meals in total privacy, sunlight through the French doors etc., when the peace was shattered by the coughing splutter of a Flymo engine doing its best not to start, accompanied by muffled cursing. "Not to worry" she loudly cried, "that'll be a member of the expert gardening company we've employed to maintain the grounds". With that, the Flymo came into sight wielded by a youth wearing a baseball cap, sunglasses and *nothing else!* Before my sister could say anything, her client muttered something about 'sorting him out' and disappeared outside, red-faced, never to be seen again!

I expect you've already spotted the worst transgression by this Flymo swinging naturist... that's right, no steel-capped boots!

Apologies to Iain MacLeod, head greenkeeper at Tain, who in our November review of the ICI Greenkeeper of the Year candidates, was mistakenly titled *McLeod*. Sorry Iain, a large scotch on me when next we meet!

And on the subject of apologies, if you're thinking there are one or two less pictures than normal in this issue of Greenkeeper International - you'd be right. A package of photographs despatched to our production editor, by recorded delivery and in plenty of time for our deadline, simply never arrived. A Post Office investigation is underway but in the meantime, on behalf of Royal Mail - sorry.



Despite hoping to have his skills tested by examples of exotic new fungi or rare species of pest, the problems brought to Robert Laycock, at a recent Barenbrug Turf Clinic, were remarkable mainly in that they reinforced the dangers of cutting corners.

Laycock, well known in the industry as a top agronomist, consultant and writer, had been invited by grass seed breeder Barenbrug to join their own experts, hosting the Clinic at the IoG Show.

"The best advice I can give to anyone" said Laycock, pictured right, with Barenbrug's Michel Mulder, "is never to compromise on materials. Problems may not become apparent immediately but as sure as night follows day, they'll surface sooner or later."

Huw Parry, Bristol and Clifton GC, pictured above left, brought to Robert the problem of Anthracnose which causes grass to yellow and then die. Its high incidence in 1992 is probably due to the much wetter weather and is particularly damaging to annual meadow grass. Relieving compaction and improving surface drainage tend to overcome the problem and it's always possible that once the meadow grass has been sufficiently weakened, more desirable grasses will become prominent.

But in critical areas, such as greens, surely the better option is to avoid its introduction in the first place. Breeders such as Barenbrug, for instance, take considerable pains to exclude annual meadow grass, selecting farmers who are able to produce clean crops (grasses) and after cleaning, select lots for special amenity use.

Like all good optimists, though, Laycock found some good arising from the incidence of Anthracnose and wonders whether the disease could be harnessed as a biological control for annual meadow grass. And maybe next time he's invited to a Barenbrug Clinic he'll find the exotic strain he's looking for.

Without proper qualifications you will not get the job you want'. How often have you heard that statement? Usually the words come from one's father or a careers officer at school – in most cases the proclamation is true. At very least, a qualification will open doors to the obtaining of a job.

In my view however, to do that job properly; effectively and therefore successfully, what is required above all else is practical training – on site; on course; down to earth, common sense training in the place where you work.

Too many golf course managers fail to take the time to ensure that such in-house training is given top priority. As managers we undoubtedly suffer because of it. We do not communicate enough with our staff. We do not delegate enough and because of this we do our staff an injustice by not allowing them to learn and thus better themselves. In this article I am expressing my own views on the subject – the importance of which cannot be overstated.

Without the proper in-house training and management of staff, greenkeeping and golf course management as a profession (I firmly believe it is a profession) will not grow in the way in which every concerned greenkeeper would wish.

Some five years ago Letchworth Golf Club employed me as their course manager and gave me the opportunity to manage totally (something which I believe we should all do). Given that remit I knew from past experience that if I was to be in any way successful, training (particularly in-house) would have to be my number one priority.

The old saying 'you are only as good as your staff' is particularly true in golf course management. For those who have the opportunity to manage, I hope the following common sense approach to training may be of some assistance.

Communication

To begin, you must communicate with your employers as well as your staff. This may seem all too elementary, but in making sure they know what you are trying to achieve they will (or should) give you full backing. In most golf clubs the people you talk to will be successful businessmen and will therefore understand the importance of training.

You must also communicate with your staff – if you do not you will not succeed. Listed here are a few simple systems we use at Letchworth.

Notice board in mess room/work-

DUNCAN'S LAW



How in-house training is handled at Letchworth, by their course manager DUNCAN MCGILVRAY

shop – A listing (for all staff to see and check on a daily basis)

- visiting golf society dates and tee-off times
- all matches
- overtime sheet
- safety policy statement
- winter programme (when applicable)
- articles of interest
- insurance liability
- weekly updates on visiting societies.

Yearly planner number one

- Competition dates
- other important dates
- Bank holidays
- all matches as a cross check (even our club secretaries get it wrong sometimes).

Yearly planner number two

- All staff summer and winter holidays (decided in early January of each year)
- spring and autumn renovation dates
- educational conferences, eg. BTME at Harrogate and IoG show.

Annual staff assessments

This is where you sit down with each member of staff individually and discuss their progress as you see it. You can relate what is expected of them in the future and, of equal importance, allow them to voice their opinion of you. This may not be something we will necessarily enjoy but we must remember that we are learn-

ing as well. The staff assessment is a splendid opportunity to declare salary increases and benefits that have been earned, for in the small staff set-up that is typical of most golf club's there will invariably be some occasional friction. I have found this assessment system to be invaluable in clearing up misunderstandings. The staff welcome such a system – they gain a clear understanding on where they stand and equally are given an opportunity to question your management techniques, which I feel is important.

A major part of any training is making sure that your staff learn about themselves; their workmates; colleagues, and other golf courses. I firmly advocate outside visits to venues such as the IoG show (all staff), BIGGA golf outings and lectures (selected staff), management courses at Aldwark and the BTME at Harrogate (selected staff). It is important that my staff have a much wider view of life than an 18 hole parkland course in North Hertfordshire. On that point, even our annual Christmas luncheon is held away from the clubhouse, thus allowing for a modest letting down of hair! All these visits are financed by the golf club. They know as well as I that the benefits gained on the golf course, in terms of working as a team and carrying out tasks with more thought and understanding, far

outweigh the modest outlay required.

Although 'in-house' is the part of training I feel most strongly about, I cannot overlook the importance the college (BIGGA approved, I hasten to add) plays in my overall thinking and strategy. I am particularly pleased to sit on a liaison committee at Oaklands College, St Albans, where greenkeeper training is discussed. This college has now recruited an ex-course manager as a full-time lecturer. Not satisfied with that progression alone, they are also attracting local practicing golf course managers to attend the college and speak to student greenkeepers. Thus, at least at Oaklands, the days are gone when a lecturer might teach students opposite views and working strategies to those held by the head greenkeeper. All this adds up to excellent training and bodes extremely well for the future.

Apart from myself, there are six staff at Letchworth, all of whom play an important part in our overall success. It is important to point out that there have been no staff changes over the past five years save for one retirement (and even he came back again!). The following thumb-nail sketches will serve to colour the picture:

Brian Allonby is my deputy course manager and has 23 years service. Brian worked under the capable direction of his father – until I came and turned everything upside down! He responded admirably and I really do not know what I would do without him.

Barney Wright is first assistant and has six years service. Barney has completed all his college studies – including fourth year management courses – mostly with distinctions. He is an ex-pro golfer and his father is a golf club secretary at another club. Barney is itching for the right golf course to come along and unfortunately we will not be able to hold him for much longer.

Paul Hufner is an assistant greenkeeper/trainee mechanic with five years service. Taken on originally as an extra pair of hands in the short term, Paul is now an extremely important member of staff. He is taking Horticultural Mechanics at Oaklands College and will be an even greater asset to the club in future years.

Gary Hyde is a tractor driver/greenkeeper with three years service. He is a great find – worked on a farm all his early life – and will work day and night if asked. He thinks life is great at Letchworth because he actually gets paid for working overtime! He can drive anything from an



Meet the team: the green staff at Letchworth

18" Paladin to a 40' Hi-Mac.

Tom Thrussell, with 15 years service (part-time/part-season), is our greenkeeper cum gardener cum stand-in tractor driver. Tom drove a tractor until his retirement in 1989 and we are pleased he chose not to retire completely. He is a mine of information on wild life, conservation and the weather. In short, he's a wonderful person to have in any team – we couldn't let him go!

Jonathan Haley is a seasonal worker with two years service. If it wasn't for Jonathan and his predecessors, none of the staff would be able to have summer holidays. He starts college in September on a full-time greenkeeping and golf course management course, also at Oaklands, and I know he will go far.

We also work closely with local schools and encourage work experience programmes as part of Education 2000 – we've seen four students through this programme and three, including Jonathan Haley, have expressed a wish to follow a career in golf course management. It proves to us that we must be doing something right.

The benefits of good in-house training are many and varied but the following are the most obvious. We have a product just like any other business: the golf course and how it is presented. If the staff are well-trained and above all happy, the course will show it.

Good in-house training encourages even the youngest and most inexperienced members of staff to speak up and gain confidence in thought, word and deed. We can learn from sixteen year olds – I know I have on more than one occasion. Confident, effective staff will ensure the efficient functioning of the course – even on those occasions when you are absent.

This reflects well on you as a manager, though unfortunately it is still not fully understood by many people.

In closing, here are some points which I believe we should all think about seriously.

- A member of staff will not work to his full potential if he is not trusted – we must explain fully the whys as well as the hows and trust them to get on with it.
- Spying on staff when they are carrying out their allotted tasks breeds contempt – you will soon find out if work is not being carried out to your satisfaction and can then take the necessary action. Watching over staff is time wasting and counter-productive.
- Your staff make the golf course what it is – 90% of your problems will come from those staff – it therefore seems to me common sense to devote at the very least 90% of your time to your staff.

It makes me smile when I see advertisements for head greenkeepers/course managers with the following demand: 'must be capable of controlling and motivating staff'. The practicalities are that staff cannot simply be controlled or motivated at the wave of a wand – we as managers can only create an environment in which staff wish to motivate themselves. The stick or carrot technique only works for a very short time – and golf course management is long term.

One last point. When you last moved to take up a position as course manager, especially at a course which was in need of considerable attention, did you hear something along the lines of 'you will need to sort out the staff first'? My own experiences have suggested no fault with staff – rather a fault that could easily be traced to the (lack of) in-house training and therefore management of staff.

How you could be an 'industry assessor'

There is so much that goes on behind the scenes in greenkeeper training and education that I am sometimes staggered by the depth and intensity of it all. The Greenkeepers Training Committee beavers away with quiet efficiency and it is to the great credit of our Association, always and quite naturally at the forefront of the GTC and always looking to the main goal, that achievements in greenkeeper training are moving at such a fine pace.

Whilst the Association cannot lay claim to the nationwide introduction of NVQs and SVQs, it seems clear to me that as a body we have generated, cajoled and agitated in this sphere to an extent that bodes extremely well for our industry – we are leaving nothing to chance and the future could not be more exciting.

Already we have seen the commissioning of a new Training Manual, and this has been widely acclaimed by all sectors of the greenkeeping industry as a huge step in the right direction – there is still work to be done, however, and we will not rest on our laurels – we plan to move ever forward and upward.

One such plan which gives cause for rejoicing is the proposal to form a network of assessors and assessment centres throughout the country. Such assessors will be recruited from our own membership and give us the unique opportunity, subject to approval by the GTC, to police our own activities.

You just need to indicate your willingness to take part

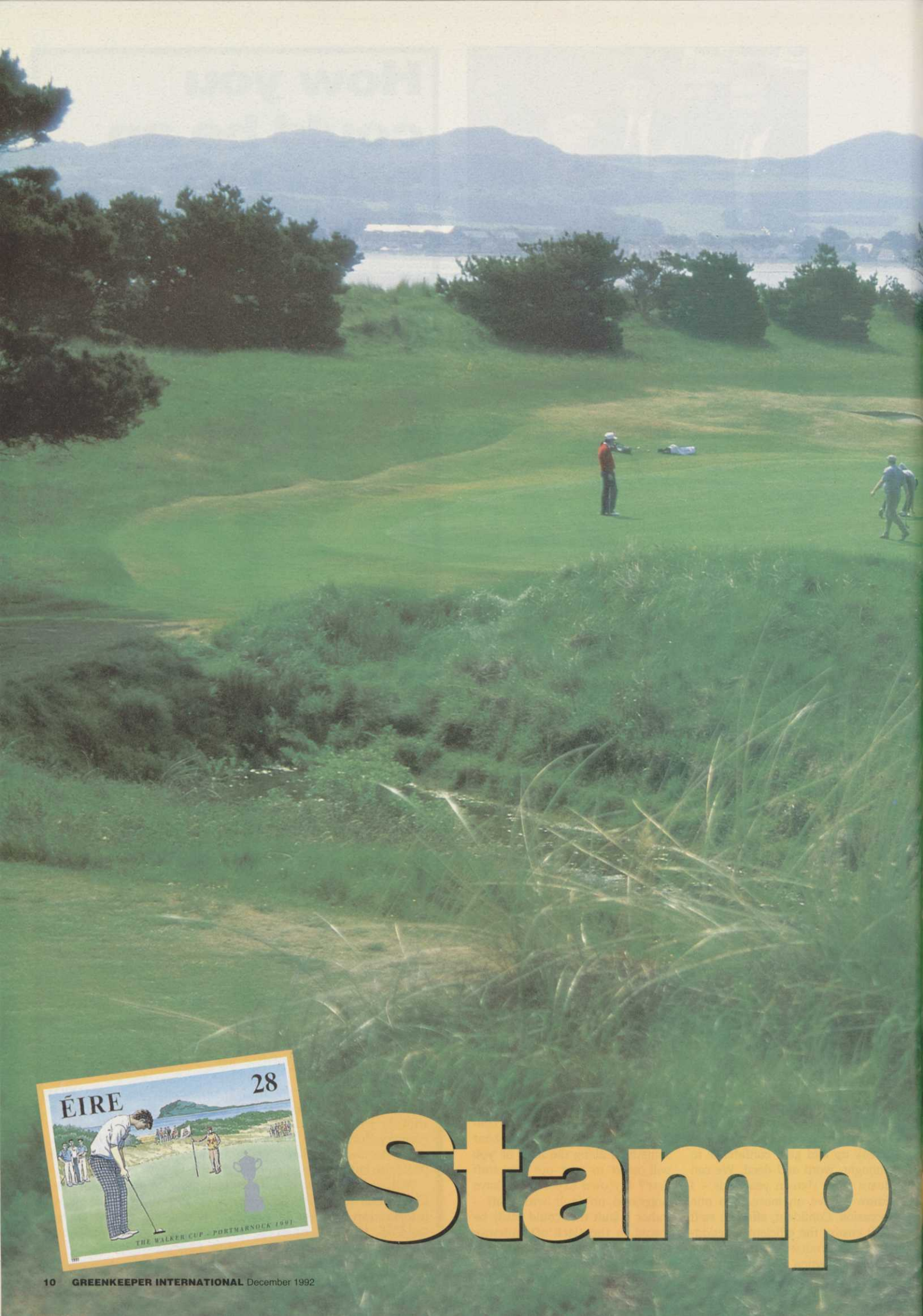
What this means in reality is that course managers and head greenkeepers who would like to be considered for training as 'Industry Assessors' and 'Regional Verifiers' need do no more than indicate their willingness. What qualifications will they need? Well, for a start, assessors will need credibility within their area or county, so candidates must be well established, front runners in their industry. Verifiers must be keenly interested in greenkeeper training and be aware of the principles of NVQs or SVQs. Of course, both assessors and verifiers must have sufficient spare time to work within the proposed structure and assessors must have the support of their own club, which would be used as a location to carry out assessments. Above all, they must be willing to receive appropriate training to become assessors or verifiers.

How much time will be necessary? Estimates suggest that the rewarding task of verifier would command roughly the same amount of time as that of a section secretary, perhaps less if more people join in the good work. For assessors, perhaps somewhat less time is necessary, though this again will be dependent upon how many head greenkeepers or course managers are recruited.

Industry assessors will become very important people, working in unison with training colleges and linked and working in liaison with regional verifiers, who in turn will liaise with the GTC. Assessors and verifiers will have their out of pocket expenses paid by the GTC.

Why is this so important for the Association? Simply that NVQs are about industries setting their own standards in accordance with the lead body for their industry, which for greenkeeping is Amenity Horticulture. By having our own trained people monitoring our own standards, we can control our own destiny, and thus raise our own already high standards.

Will you give some thought to becoming an assessor or verifier? Start by asking at regional or section level for more information, or talk to our own education expert, David Golding. His GTC number, lest it is not already indelibly printed on your mind, is 03473-640. Ring him now!



Stamp