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is the official monthly magazine of the British & International Golf Greenkeepers Association. Contact us at Aldwark Manor, Aldwark, Alne, York YO6 2NF

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Please send all editorial contributions, advertising copy, subscriptions and address changes to BIGGA at Aldwark Manor, Aldwark, Alne, York YO6 2NF

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Circulation is by subscription. Subscription rate: UK £34 per year, Europe and Eire £44. The magazine is also distributed to BIGGA members, golf clubs, local authorities, the turf industry, libraries and central government.

ISSN 0961 - 6977

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MARCH 1995

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One of the most attractive features at Brocket Hall golf course – the bridge built in 1760



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Want to exhibit at next year's BTME? Call Louise Lunn on 01347 838581 for a comprehensive information pack

Time for greenkeeping to take the global view

It is that time of year when the international role of BIGGA comes up for discussion. This occurs during the European Forum at the BTME and is then closely followed by the GCSAA Conference and Show which invariably provides for an international gathering of greenkeepers and administrators. The recent GCSAA Conference and show in San Francisco attracted all time record numbers in the region of 17,500 and the International Summit which Chairman, Barry Heaney and myself attended was certainly the most worthwhile international gathering of recent years. Two hours of intense discussion took place with three main topics – Global Concerns Facing Golf and Golf Course Management; Education of the World's Golf Course Superintendents and The Status of the Golf Course Superintendent Throughout the World. Some 15 countries were represented and whilst there were exchanges of view on such vital topics as environmental considerations, educational programmes and what is generally perceived to be the improving image of the greenkeeper, all present were united on the need for improved communication and debated how best this could be achieved.

Communication is of course facilitated by personal contact and four of my most interesting conversations during the show were with Wayne Hinton and Euan Laird, President and Chief Executive Officer respectively of the Australian Golf Course Superintendents Association, Trevor Smith, President of the Canadian Golf Superintendents Association, Ricardo de Udaeta, Greens Committee member of the Argentina Golf Association and Nigel Butler, Immediate Past Chairman of the Golf Course Managers, Greenkeepers Association of South Africa. The discussions which took place have undoubtedly led to closer relations between our respective bodies and to a greater understanding of common problems. Much international goodwill is generated annually at the



BIGGA in focus

BY NEIL THOMAS

BTME and the GCSAA event but all too frequently this can be dissipated through lack of contact in the ensuing year. I really do believe that this year good intentions will be turned to positive action as there seemed to be an underlying determination on the part of all concerned to communicate more effectively.

BIGGA will need to be instrumental in facilitating improved communication and in so doing assist other Associations in their growth and development. We can also learn much from the programmes being developed by other Associations. BIGGA, as probably the second largest greenkeeping Association worldwide, must be seen to give a lead in these matters and indeed to do justice to the 'international' contained in our title. The Board of Management has recognised this and made budgetary provision for such development. At present BIGGA has some 320 international members spread across 32

countries and their help will need to be sought in the vitally necessary exchange of information and implementation of educational programmes which will allow the profession to grow and flourish worldwide. In this day and age there is no need for members in distant countries to feel remote – indeed some are more involved and closer to BIGGA than fellow members in the United Kingdom. Let me give just one example. Bil Montague is based in Ohio and is one of our Master Greenkeepers. He is in regular contact and has twice visited the BTME. During the recent GCSAA show he was only too happy to help out on the BIGGA stand when he was not proudly touring the show in his BIGGA Master Greenkeeper blazer. So I would ask our international members to get in touch and make suggestions as to how communications can be improved and I would like to see 1995 as a year when real progress in this regard will be made.

If we can work closely with our international members how then can BIGGA take a lead in communicating with its fellow Associations? It can start with the dissemination of information from Headquarters and this will begin immediately. I believe this will stimulate other Associations to respond and then we can move forward together. In the not too distant future the time will surely come when the annual gatherings at the BTME and the GCSAA Conference and Show are supplemented by more formal meetings during the year to establish com-

mon goals and policies – the fields of education and the environment could be prime current considerations.

The Swedish Greenkeepers Association has invited BIGGA to be present at their conference and exhibition this coming September and this represents an excellent opportunity to learn from one of the most progressive associations. I have previously had the opportunity to speak at their conference and I am sure that Billy McMillan, Course Manager at the Wildwood Golf Club, who has accepted an invitation to speak this year, will return enriched by the experience. So the exchange of views and information is facilitated and BIGGA must be prepared to play its part on the international stage – not I hasten to add intrusively. We will go where we are invited and welcomed respecting the wishes of our fellow associations but offering help and guidance where it is requested. The world is becoming a smaller place and greenkeeping can only benefit from actively cultivating a recognised and respected international and worldwide image.

Editor to move on

BIGGA's editor Chris Boiling is off to pastures new. Following production of the April issue of *Greenkeeper International*, Chris will take up a new post in Dubai with Motivate Publishing, one of the leading publishing houses in the Middle East. Chris will be responsible for 'What's On', a monthly Entertainment and Sports magazine. BIGGA's executive director Neil Thomas said, "We are very sorry to lose Chris' services as he has developed *Greenkeeper International* to an ever higher standard during the last year. The search is now on for a successor who will continue to take the magazine forward as the market leader". Design and production editor Tim Moat will take on additional editorial responsibilities for the May and subsequent issues pending a new appointment.

Another new Golden Key member

Massey Ferguson has become the latest member of BIGGA's Education and Development Fund, bringing to five the number of new companies already in Golden or Silver Key membership for 1995.

Commenting on Massey Ferguson's decision to take up Golden Key membership, BIGGA's executive director, Neil Thomas said, "The Association is delighted to receive this backing for the fund from one of the industry's leading companies. The fund goes from strength to strength and the training aids and programmes now possible as a result will bring great future benefits for greenkeepers. We are indebted to the industry for its ongoing support".

BTME rival changes its name and dates

P&O Events has backed down from staging a rival event to BTME in 1996.

Following the success of the seventh BIGGA Turf Management Exhibition in Harrogate in January, P&O has moved its proposed new show from January '96 to June 11-13 1996.

It has also renamed its show Landscape Professional 96 – significantly, dropping the word 'Turf' from its original title. The new show will be held in the National Hall at the Olympia Exhibition Centre, London.

The June timing and new title indicate that P&O is teaming up with BALI, although confirmation of this is not expected until a press conference on March 23.

The English Golf Union, which was due to organise the golf education seminars at the January show, said it had not been notified of the changes and would not comment until it knew what was going on.

SALTEX gets golfing boost

With BIGGA and the IoG working closer together, SALTEX '95 – the Institute of Groundsmanship annual trade show at the Royal Windsor Racecourse – will feature an increased number of golf-related products. Companies already booking space at the September 5-7 show include Tildenet, Standard Golf, Ransomes, Toro/Lely, Jacobsen Textron, the Inturf Group and Zeneca.

West country gears up for Westurf '95

You can do it all at Westurf, promise the organisers. If you're looking for new machinery or new products, you'll find them on show at Long Ashton Golf Club near Bristol on Wednesday April 26. If you want to see some being demonstrated, you can. Just fancy a day out? Want to meet old friends? Then join the rest of the fine turf industry at Westurf.

More than 40 exhibitors have already signed up for the show,

NEWS



Learning a lesson

Northop Country Park Golf Club has been forging closer ties with its local college, the Welsh College of Horticulture. Students spent a day at the 18-hole John Jacobs-designed course as part of their NVQs in greenkeeping and golf course management. The club's machinery maintenance engineer Malcolm Westcott (pictured right with Ray Cotgrave, David Coates and Paul Drennan) gave the 17 students tips on maintaining the equipment.

But the students are not the only ones swotting – course manager Noel Hynes is training to be an NVQ assessor. Noel is currently part way through a course at another Clwyd college and, if he qualifies, he will be able to put his own staff through their NVQ paces. Noel, who also helps with tutorials at the Northop college, said: "We like to help the students whenever we can and we do have a good relationship with the college."

including British Seed Houses, Roffey Bros, Sisis, Standard Golf UK, Farmura, Barenbrug, Ruffords Top Dress Supplies, Rigby Taylor, Avoncrop, the Sports Turf Research Institute, Toro and Ransomes.

Sabo-Roberine distributor Claymore Grass Machinery is, for the first time, taking a stand in its own right at the show, which is organised by BIGGA's South West and South Wales Region. Product

manager Clive Pentecost explained why they support Westurf: "All the profits go towards the education of greenkeepers. This gives us an opportunity to put something back into the industry." On the demonstration area they will be showing the new 1.8m wide Continent 400-3D for cutting tees and bunker surrounds. For further details about the show call 01803 844056.

FLYING DIVOTS



■ Grass care equipment manufacturer Dennis has appointed ex-Jacobsen man Max Peacock as northern area

sales manager. Sales director Ian Howard will look after the southern half of the country.

■ Wortley Golf Club deputy Robert Needham, 41, has been appointed head greenkeeper at Hickleton Golf Course, near Doncaster, following the departure of Tony Booth.

■ John Turner, 31, is moving from France's Golf National, where he was in charge of the irrigation system, to take up the deputy head greenkeeper post at Keswick Golf Club. This follows the death of Maurice Studdart.

■ Golfer Lennie Learmouth, 62, landed a 40lb pike in a flooded bunker at Wetherby GC. The 4ft whopper is thought to have been trapped when the nearby River Wharfe burst its banks.

■ The PGA European Tour's director of agronomy, Bruce Jamieson, has left to set up his own consultancy business. He was with the Tour, which sponsors the runners-up prizes in the Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year Award, for six years.

■ Symbio has joined forces with three companies to distribute its biological products, such as Green Circle and Black Layer Treatment. These are Stewarts in Scotland, Turf-Actant Products in Norfolk, Suffolk Cambs and Essex and Roffey Brothers Ltd in South Wales and the south west.

■ Roffey Brothers Ltd of Bournemouth has appointed RE Rushbrook and Son of Ipswich as a distributor for its fertilisers, including the new mini-granular spring turf fertiliser Gypronit.

■ Maxicrop International tells us its no1 seller is its concentrated seaweed extract, No1 Triple Seaweed, while sales of No6 ProGreen have increased "significantly".

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NEWS

Servicing incentive

Greenkeepers who buy Ransomes' G-Plex 160 and E-Plex mowers in south and west Wales are being offered virtually free servicing for the next three years by local distributors RS Bird Ltd of Cowbridge, South Glamorgan, and Carmarthen, Dyfed. The only charge made will be for consumable items such as oil, filters, fuel, batteries and tyres. Said managing director Jeff Bird: "In making this offer, we are giving customers the opportunity to receive 18 on-site service visits and three winter overhauls, including cylinder regrinds, at a fraction of the normal cost."

RS Bird also announced it has become the South Wales distributor for Japanese-made Shibaura tractors. Tel: 0446 772001.



Lost words of wisdom found after 65 years

A lost manuscript, written about 65 years ago by one of the world's most famous architects, Alister Mackenzie, has been found.

Called 'The Spirit of St Andrews', it covers the history of golf from the author's eyes, his favourite courses and holes and there is also a chapter on the swing. The manuscript also had a handwritten introduction by Bobby Jones.

It was discovered by Macken-



zie's step-grandson, Raymund Haddock, in a box of Mackenziana and is published as a book this spring.

Mackenzie's designs include many of the world's top courses -

Augusta National, Cypress Point, Royal Melbourne, Crystal Downs, San Francisco Golf Club and Pasatiempo.

An earlier book of his, *Golf Architecture*, is considered a classic. It contains memorable sentences like this: "One of the objects in placing hazards is to give the players as much pleasurable excitement as possible." *Golf Architecture* was published in 1920, prior to his emigration to America.

The *Spirit of St Andrews* was written around 1930, four years before the former surgeon died.

Top golfer Ben Crenshaw, a student of course design and an avid golf historian, is one of the people who has read extracts. He was suitably impressed: "It's incredible. Mackenzie goes on about how he uses camouflage in his courses, and how it relates to war tactics."

Peter Alliss has also seen it: "Perhaps the discovery of this manuscript written in the galant doctor's own fair hand was not quite as dramatic as Lord Caernarvon discovering the burial ground of Tutankhamen, but for lovers of golf it must run damn close."



Vitax technical sales adviser Mike Shephard (left) presents a BIGGA gift voucher for £100 to Jeff Dickenson of Hucknall GC. Jeff won the prize in a competition at BTME.

FLYING DIVOTS

■ Three-year-old Mill Ride - the outstanding Donald Steel-designed course in Berkshire - has been sold, along with some nearby luxury apartments, for around £5 million. The buyer is a leisure and hotel operator from the Far East.

■ Phil Breakey from Irrigation Control has joined Tim Hooper and Paul de Rham's Weathermatic dealer network. Tel: 01606 558927

■ Martin Bros and Tim Banks of Fen Turf Dressings have teamed up to produce and market Fendress in the north-west of England. Martin Bros has also announced the appointment of Melvyn Guy as north-east area salesman.

■ Paul McDowell of Slinfold GC proved the value of greenkeeper education when he entered the Rigby Taylor Technical Quiz during the BIGGA Turf Management Exhibition at Harrogate. His correct diagnosis and cure of eight problems was drawn by BIGGA chairman Barry Heaney and his prize - a hamper of assorted bottles - will be delivered to his home.

■ Grasslands Turf Farm, New Romney, Kent has appointed two new distributors as part of its expansion programme: The Cottismore Group, Newbury (tel: 0635 298368) and Evergreen Landscape Supplies, Congresbury, Avon (tel: 0934 876337).

■ Neil Toner of Heswall Golf Club has won the Sisis Trophy for being the best craft level student at Reaseheath College.

■ Brian Mitchell has been appointed to the newly-created position of director of engineering at Ransomes,



Sims and Jefferies. Previously the company's general manager of engineering, Brian retains overall responsibility for the design and development of all Ransomes' machines produced in Ipswich. He has been with the firm for 30 years.

Some points of interest to come out of the BTME seminar programme

DR JAMES BEARD

Pesticides is a very controversial area. Many people associate golf courses and toxic waste dumps in the same breath. The perception is there although it is incorrect.

Trends concerning pesticides include greater difficulty in registration of pesticides, continued increases in cost and much of that cost is the cost of doing the research to get the information to register the products. I also anticipate increasing employee awareness regarding safe pesticide usage, tighter government controls on pesticide use, and less broad spectrum applications. I see a move away from fence-to-fence applications on a calendar basis to going out, scouting the area, assessing whether there really is a need to apply that particular pesticide at that time or that year.

DOUGLAS SHEARER

Protective clothing relies totally on the PPE. If you do not choose the right PPE, then you've problems. Some 95% of that used by local authorities and on golf courses in the past 25 years has been the wrong protective clothing. People thought they were protected – and weren't. The problem is that if people think they are protected they will put themselves in danger.

COLIN HEGARTY

How do greenkeeping budgets fit in with the overall business of the golf course? Generally, the clubhouse accounts for 50% of all the money spent, and the golf course accounts for about a third of the expenditure, with labour accounting for about half of that third. It is not a bad rule of thumb to look at your budget and work out what proportion of total club expenditure you are getting. If it's nowhere near a third (or your labour bill is a lot more or less than half your budget) then there's a problem.

JAMES MOORE

The first thing you probably do after you've finished a job is wash the equipment down. You've got to stop doing that if you want to be more environmentally friendly.

Look what you're doing. You go out there and you generate lots of clippings, which are between 3 and 5% nitrogen, 1 and 2% phosphorous and a lot of other things as well. Where do those clippings go? They're washed off and go down a drain.

So what can you do? Simple suggestions include building up the intake on the wash rack and putting a screen over it to reduce the number of clippings going down. We let the machines dry off in the sun and then blow them clean. The benefits are:

1. We don't send clippings down the drain;
2. If you're using your irrigation system as a source of water, the water is coming out at 100-120psi and as soon as you start washing the reels, guess where all the grease went out of the bearings and seals? It washed right out. We shouldn't be surprised that the cables rust and the bearings go bad when we wash the equipment every single day.

What the

With reconstruction work at established clubs becoming a growing market for architects, there is a fair chance you will soon be faced with appointing and working with one. Cameron Sinclair gave delegates at this year's BTME seminars this advice...

A good working relationship between a golf course architect (gca) and greenkeeper is, in my opinion, crucial to the success of any construction project. When I consider the best projects I have worked on, a common feature has been that I have had a first-class working relationship with the greenkeeper. There are basically two circumstances in which we have to work together:

- When a greenkeeper is appointed to maintain a new course;
- When a golf course architect is appointed to advise an established golf course.

They are very different situations – in the first instance the gca is often responsible for the selection of the greenkeeper, at the existing club the boot can be on the other foot – you, as the greenkeeper, can select the gca! I am going to concentrate on this situation.

Firstly, how do you appoint a gca? Golf course architects all come from different backgrounds and have different strengths and weaknesses depending on their ability and experience – you need to choose one that meets your needs and requirements.

I believe it is important that the greenkeeper gets involved in the appointment process. You should use the greenkeeper network to find out about the most suitable architects.

Having decided on your gca, it is very worthwhile writing down in the form of a brief what you expect from him. Don't tell him how to do the design, but give him a performance specification of what you expect from the end result. This will help the gca to focus on your needs and stop him experimenting on your course with the latest craze in golf course architecture.

Once the design has been agreed and detailed plans have been drawn up, the first big area in which the gca and greenkeeper need to work together is in deciding on the construction methodology that will be used during the implementation of the scheme. Obviously the size of the scheme will have a big influence on the decision on how the project will be implemented but if the scope of work is not too big one of the first questions I am usually asked by the committee is whether I think the greenkeeper can do the work.

As I see it there are essentially three options:

1. The club takes responsibility for the work using its own resources, ie. the greenstaff;
2. The gca draws up tender documentation and contractors are asked to quote on a fixed price basis.

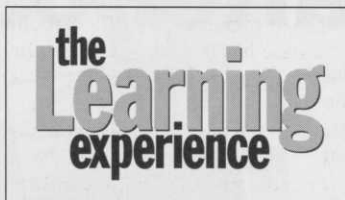
When I discuss these options with the greenkeeper I find there can be a variety of responses. Generally if the project is not too large, eg building one or two new tees, or a few new bunkers or a new green, I find that greenkeepers are quite keen to take it on, particularly if the work can be fitted into their winter programme. Very often advice from the gca comes in the form of a series of recommendations which can be implemented over a few years so the work can be done as part of a winter programme. Training in construction techniques amongst greenkeepers is improving and I find quite a lot of enthusiasm amongst greenkeepers to become involved in construction – indeed some of you take a great pride in not wanting outside contractors on your course. Others alternatively take the view that they have not got time and do not want the responsibility. The scope of work is

clearly a major factor in terms of the time you would have available to devote to it.

Before discussing it with the club, I like to discuss all the options with the greenkeeper first and present a joint approach with the

greenkeeper on how the construction methodology should be handled.

Whichever way you decide to go, it is vital that the gca makes sufficient visits during the construction stage. Under a fixed price contract the gca will be responsible for supervising the work and his fees will be based on the value of the contract. His visits are therefore built into the fee. Under other options it is important that a certain number of visits from the gca are built into the budget. Gca's get very irritated if, having advised a club and produced design plans, they find that the club do not want to pay for supervisory visits during construction. All plans are open to interpretation on site and it is annoying to find that your ideas have been implemented but the shapes are all wrong. The art of golf course architecture not only involves technical ability and an understanding of golf course strategy but also aesthetics. A good gca has got flair, imagination and an eye for the land – he should be at his most productive in this department during construction – if you do not use your gca at this time then it is not worth employing him at all. Most gca's love getting out of the office spending time on the site during the shaping process – so use them.



experts say...

I often see examples of work at existing clubs where what has been done is technically sound but basically lacks flair. This scenario can occur when a gca has prepared a masterplan of improvements at an existing club. Very often the recommendations are to do with bunkering – suggesting new bunkers and removing obsolete bunkers. The greenstaff set about implementing the proposals under the guidance of the greens chairman and the result is a triumph of the practical over the aesthetic. Greenkeepers need to recognise their own limitations and recommend to the greens committee that the gca is asked to look over what is being done.

There is a crucial point in the shaping process when the gca should be there to approve the works. That is basically the point before any drainage is installed or topsoil replaced. For example, it is fairly straightforward to reshape a green base but once you start drainage and build up you are locked into the shapes on the sub-base and it becomes expensive to make changes. So try and arrange visits from the gca at the point of sub-soil formation and make sure that the machinery is available on site to make any changes during the visit. Even if a contractor is on site they generally won't charge extras for making changes to the sub-soil base but if they have to undo completed work they usually do.

I would therefore hope that the greenkeeper would keep me informed of progress and advise me when would be the most productive time to visit. In this respect do not be afraid to shout at the gca if you feel his presence is required – gca's often have more than one project on at one time and they will tend to prioritise their time according to who screams at them the loudest!

A final point on the timing of visits. It is obviously essential to get the basic shapes right but you also need to involve the gca for the finishing touches. Very small changes in level or in the profile of the bunker can make all the difference to the imagery and aesthetics of the picture. A gca should have the eye for the job so try and make sure he is around before the turf is laid or the seed sown.

In conclusion, in order to establish a good working relationship with the gca you should:

1. Get involved in the appointment process and find out about your gca through talking to fellow greenkeepers.
2. Discuss the construction methodology with the gca and do not be afraid to take on the responsibility.
3. Present a joint proposal with the gca to the committee. Make sure you get enough visits from the construction and be aware of the critical point formation when it is easy to make changes.
4. Use the gca for the finishing touches.



TOMMY LINDELOF

Chief executive of the Swedish Greenkeepers Association and publisher of Greenbladet

The dentist to his patient: "Unfortunately, I have to pull out a tooth."

The patient: "Will it hurt?"

The dentist: "Normally not, but sometimes I hurt my wrist..."

This somewhat absurd dialogue could, figuratively speaking, be a dialogue between the greenkeeper and the chairman of green. Although, they should think in the same way, they do not. The greenkeeper makes a statement based on a professional view of the problem. The elected representative often reacts in one or two of the following ways:

1. Does it cost money?
2. How shall I explain this to the captain or the board of management?
3. Does this affect my chances of re-election?

In Sweden, last year, we saw quite a few examples where elected representatives of the golf clubs turned a businesslike problem into a personal problem. For example, if the irrigation system is inadequate during a drought, the golf club blames the greenkeeper for not irrigating enough. Or, in the spring, if it is too cold for the grass to grow, the greenkeeper is blamed for not fertilising. Or if the greenkeeper is told to lower the height of cut to improve the speed of the ball and the greenkeeper says that it cannot be done because it will kill the grass, the greenkeeper is blamed for having difficulty in co-operating.

In my view, there is nothing wrong in these examples with either the greenkeeper nor the elected representative. What is wrong is the golf club and its form of organisation. The golf club as a non-profitable organisation is not able to handle activities that should be dealt with in a professional way. Nor are they upto handling decisions that have long-term effects.

We have had golf clubs in Sweden for 90 years and in Britain for nearly 250 years. As far as I understand the structure of the golf club has not changed much during these years, although the activities within the golf club have undergone many changes. Furthermore, the demands from members on quality and excellent conditions on the course have been much accentuated during recent years. In addition, laws and regulations imposed from outside the sport interfere with the maintenance of the golf course and how to handle employed people.

In my view, a golf club should be run as a limited company. The members would still handle the game of golf (competitions, handicaps etc) and the social life (parties, playing cards etc) but all the activities that must be handled in a professional way should be handled by a limited company whose shares are owned 100% by the golf club. The secretary would become the managing director and you would have professionals in charge of the following 'departments': golf course, finance and administration, and buildings.

To avoid a situation where corruption by friends could arise, there should be different members on the board of the golf club and the board of the limited company.

I do not think one could directly reduce the costs of the golf club by this organisation, but I think the better management that would result would reduce costs. My prime aim with this setup is to create a better framework for a professional management and with a company, I think, the members would better understand and appreciate the professional work that must be done. Furthermore, the management of a company is better described in laws and regulations than the golf club and that in itself gives the company a firmer ground to stand on.

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