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■ The next edition of
Greenkeeper International
should be with you by May 4

GREENKEEPER

International

APRIL 1996

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Majesty of deer at the Forest of Arden; and the Double Eagle club in Ohio. Picture by Brian Morgan

FREE READER REPLY SERVICE

Use the post-paid Reader Reply Card facing Page 2 for further information on the products and services advertised in this issue. Just state the companies' Ad Ref numbers, post the card to us and we'll arrange for further information to be sent to you direct.



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Is there a spring in your heels?

It is a Monday morning early in April, the morning after the night before. Yes it's *that* Monday morning, when, like millions of others, you have spent the previous evening viewing the final exciting stages of the Masters from the Augusta National. The Golf Course was at its majestic best, the weather was glorious, the flowers in full bloom and the golf quite breathtaking on fast, true greens. If you suddenly have the feel-good factor then you can be assured that your golf club members have that very same feeling as they make their way to the golf club just hours after witnessing the idyllic setting of Augusta. So everything in the garden, or should I say golf course, is lovely, or is it? When you wake up on that Monday morning at the crack of dawn, the first you hear is a howling gale and the rain thudding against the window. It's the first signs of a bad day at the office. It's been a cold spring and the grass isn't growing, your maintenance budget has been cut and you've had to shed a member of staff. At the first tee a delay is already apparent as members grapple with the adverse conditions. Their enthusiasm, galvanised by the events of the previous evening, is rapidly being tempered in the wind and the rain. Out on the course the greens are already gathering water and then you spot the Captain and Chairman of Green in the second four-ball already held up. There is no longer any feel-good factor but an overwhelming feeling of stress. Spring may have sprung but this is a very different world to the one you witnessed only a few hours ago and where have the good times gone?

Why is it then that the coming of spring and the Masters Tournament is invariably accompanied by tension among the greenkeeping fraternity? For many greenkeepers it assumes the stressful proportions of the "Augusta Syndrome". In many ways, of course, this is purely illusory, and Augusta merely focuses attention on a particular time in the year when members enthusiasm and expectations are high for the new season, while greenkeepers under



BIGGA in focus

BY NEIL THOMAS

pressure from budget and staffing restrictions are invariably coming out of a winter period which has been wet, cold and unyielding in terms of preparing the golf course to members' expectations.

On the one hand then, members expectations for their golf course, while on the other the trials and tribulations of the greenkeeping staff. It's not long before the Chairman of Green is under pressure on the one hand from members seeking instant solutions to transform their windswept, sodden, under-prepared golf course while on the other, the greenkeepers are seeking his understanding and support as they work within the limitations of weather and often inadequate budgets and staffing. In turn the Captain comes under pressure. An improvement in the weather can help but the climate cannot be guaranteed. If matters continue to deteriorate, it may well be only a matter of months before the die is cast and another Course Manager/Head Greenkeeper bites the dust. This all has an air of inevitability about it and yet is it really inevitable? Surely in this day and age these are issues which an enlightened golf club can tackle constructively and resolve. Alternatively are they in fact issues of this day and age with its pressures and demands which did not exist in anything like this measure in days gone by and where there is no will to resolve?

I come down on the side of the former and many of the problems can be alleviated through communication. This is needed throughout the club and it does

not begin on that notorious Monday morning in April. It is a 12 month process. Let's take the Course Manager/Head Greenkeeper first. How often does he speak with members in a social context – on the golf course, in the clubhouse or perhaps even the car park? Does he utilise the members' notice board to pass on information on course conditions, alterations and improvements? What provision is there for the holding of workshops for members where they can be informed of the capital and maintenance budgets, of the work programme and of any proposals for improvements to the golf course? Is there regular contact with the Chairman of Green and close liaison with the club secretary? Is there a good working relationship with the club professional for he is in regular contact with members? There are avenues then which can and must be utilised by the Course Manager/Head Greenkeeper to get his message across. If he and his staff are then seen to be working to the club's approved programme to the best of their ability within their budget and staffing resources and given that members have been provided with the facts, then much criticism will begin to dissipate.

Then there is the role of Chairman of Green and his Committee. It is their duty to communicate with the greenkeeping staff and subsequently through the club's committee structure to the general membership. They can also communicate with members in a social context while playing golf. The partnership of the Chairman

of Green and Course Manager/Head Greenkeeper is a vital one and must be worked at by both parties. Quite often it is the breakdown in this relationship which precipitates trouble. This breakdown can often be the result of member pressure which in turn undermines the Chairman of Green's position. He needs to be someone who shows an empathy with greenkeeping and greenkeepers and, who, without instant knowledge, is prepared to learn in his role. There needs to be a long term commitment by him and his club to that role for continuity is all important in a successful relationship with the Course Manager/Head Greenkeeper. Again, the Chairman of Green's communication with the Captain is important for the latter will change annually and his enthusiasm for all things to be perfect during his year must be tempered by a degree of realism not least in matters appertaining to the golf course.

It is my belief that poor and in some cases non-existent communication is the root cause of many of the problems faced by greenkeepers and the "Augusta Syndrome" merely highlights this fact in April each year. If the relevant people are prepared to work at this vital aspect of running a golf club then there will be much less stress and heartache all round. It certainly won't resolve all the problems but it may enable those charged with the responsibility for maintaining the golf course to sleep a little better at night and even to appreciate perhaps the first joys of spring.

Meet Lisa, BIGGA's latest recruit



Lisa Walls is the latest recruit to the BIGGA staff at Headquarters at Aldwark Manor.

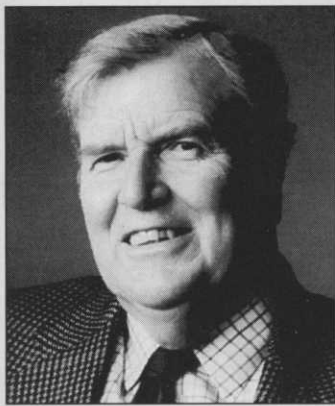
Seventeen year-old Lisa joined as a clerical assistant at the beginning of March and is combining her new job with an NVQ Level 2 Business Administration Course in York.

Although currently living in Linton-on-Ouse, where her father is in the

RAF, Lisa has spent time all over the country. She has also lived abroad and was living with her family in Kuwait when Iraq invaded. Lisa was among the children met by Saddam Hussain when he attempted his infamous televised propaganda exercise.

Now back home her interests are more mundane and include horse riding, swimming, reading, dancing and singing – where her Karaoke skills will be a superb addition to the BIGGA Girls at next year's BTME.

NEWS



Seed trade bids fond farewell to Jonathan

Jonathan Franks has retired after 20 years with British Seed Houses and a total of 32 years in the seed trade.

He joined SISIS Equipment Ltd in 1962 when the company was known as William Hargreaves Ltd and moved to Twyford Seeds, where he worked alongside Jim Arthur in 1967. He joined British Seed Houses in 1977.

Since then he has been responsible for advising on grass seed mixtures not only in the UK but also in mainland Europe and the Middle East. He is also credited with introducing Creeping Bents into the UK when the species was sown on the greens at Badgemore Park at Henley.

During his two decades with the British Seed Houses Jonathan has seen the company supply grass seed for 230 new golf courses, including major projects such as The Belfry, St Mellion, Collingtree Park, East Sussex National, The Wisley, The Buckinghamshire, The Oxfordshire and Bearwood Lakes.

In his retirement Jonathan has become secretary to the British Association of Golf Course Constructors and a judge for the Britain in Bloom competition. He also hopes to spend more time fly fishing.



■ Martin Bond, of Elmwood College, Cupar, Fife, and a finalist last year in the Toro/PGA European Tour Student Greenkeeper of the Year, has been awarded the Barenbrug Certificate of Excellence for his outstanding performance in his college work.

At the prize giving he was presented with the certificate and a book token by Barenbrug Area Manager Adrian Ellis while he was also congratulated on his performance by David Miller, Chairman of SCOTVEC, and Carol Borthwick of Elmwood College.

"It is reassuring to see colleges such as Elmwood and students such as Martin ensuring quality well into the next century. So it is always a pleasure for us at Barenbrug to reward particularly outstanding achievements whenever we can," said Adrian.

Golf course owners form Association

The Association of Golf Course Owners has been formed to provide members with information on subjects ranging from VAT, clubhouse repairs, insurance etc.

The Association has been formed by golf coach and course owner Vivien Saunders and among its aims are to produce a bi-monthly newsletter; put together an advisory panel

covering aspects of managing a golf course; hold seminars in greenkeeping, golf course management, clubhouse management, food and drink, marketing and advertising; encourage machinery share or exchange between members and negotiate special discounted rates and special promotions in various aspects of the business.

It is a non-profit making organisation set up for golf club proprietors and operators, including pay-as-you-play courses.

It aims to provide them with a single voice and to promote member clubs to a wider golfing public, to help increase income and public awareness and encourage new golfers to the game.

■ BTME 1997 is off to a roaring start with yellow forms flooding through the letter box at BIGGA HQ. Over 100 companies have already rebooked stand space. Remaining space is limited so please contact Louise Lunn Tel: 01347 838581. Don't miss out on Europe's largest indoor turf show. Book your space now.



FLYING DIVOTS

■ Following several attempts to misuse both the STRI name and logo, the STRI has taken legal action to protect the use made of both.

"It is not STRI's practice to state that it approves any product, and it is further practice only to allow any client receiving their results from STRI to use those results for promotional purposes only with STRI's permission and subject to a suitable undertaking being entered into by that client," explained Mike Canaway, Chief Executive.

STRI is sure that its clients recognise the importance of this, not only to the Institute, but for the industry generally. It therefore wishes to assure everyone that its protection policy will be rigorously applied and invites anyone to notify it if any breaches of this policy come to light in the future.

■ Avoncrop Amenity Products has opened a depot at Eastern Way, Bracknell, Berks to service London and the Home Counties. The new depot holds a wide range of fertilisers, chemicals, grass seed, marking materials and sundries. For further details please contact the depot manager Johanna Feltham Tel: 01344 426600.

■ Rolawn has opened a new depot on the Hillier Garden Centre at Sunningdale in Berkshire.

"Rolawn's delivery service will get even better because the M3, M4 and M25 will be easier to reach and therefore Rolawn Turf will get to our customers much faster," said Terry Ryan, Sales and Marketing Director.



■ Richard Whyman, Head Greenkeeper of Bude and North Cornwall GC receives a BIGGA gift voucher for £150 from Allan Stow, Technical Sales Adviser for Vitax. Richard's name was pulled out of the hat by BIGGA Chairman Dean Cleaver at BTME 96 earlier this year.

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Double action Vitesse is a brand new and powerful concept in the fight against turf disease.

It has a unique combination of two active ingredients - carbendazim, a proven and effective systemic fungicide and iprodione, a contact fungicide which gets to work from the moment you spray.

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Another 'Oscar' for BIGGA magazine

BIGGA's prestigious monthly magazine *Greenkeeper International* has again been praised in a trade journals competition, winning a Certificate of Merit award in the Magazine of the Year category against stiff competition.

It is the third year in a row that the magazine has collected an

accolade, this year at a regional awards ceremony in Manchester.

Judges were looking for editorial excellence and high standards of design, and with *Greenkeeper International* they were impressed with the direct way the magazine addressed its target audience. "Clearly it is giv-

ing readers what they want," said one judge. "Its pagination and paper quality give it a 'feel good' factor and a bright, lively cover adds to a favourable first impression. Any readership survey is likely to confirm that the magazine provides its specialist subscribers with a jolly good read."



Space age arrives in Loch Lomond

Loch Lomond Golf Club has found a novel way to create a dry environment to drill greens when the Scottish weather is not being too cooperative.

A huge bubble, large enough to cover an entire green and inflated by a giant fan, arrived at the club at the beginning of February and has allowed Course Superintendent Ken Siems and his staff to work on greens in dry conditions.

At up to 10 feet high the bubble is large enough for a tractor to drive inside the bubble. Known as the Liquid Sod Growing Dome it is 500 metres square in size and was produced by Jesse Johnson, of Liquid Sod.

"It really has made a huge dif-

ference to what we have been able to do on the course," explained Ken, who is preparing for the Loch Lomond World Invitational on the PGA European Tour in September.

"We can take it down and erect it in three and a half hours so we are able to move it around quite easily."

The Loch Lomond bubble is the first to have been put into active, commercial, service although prototypes were tested at the London Golf Club, Stamford Bridge – home of Chelsea FC and one of the courts at the All England Tennis Club at Wimbledon.

"They were really tests to see if the air pressure could hold the

dome up and test the lightweight plastic."

The bubble is weighed down at the sides by water ballast and the whole structure is held together by powerful velcro, allowing it to be reduced or extended in size. It is also strong enough for a man to walk over.

As well as the ability to heat, the Dome can also be used in areas where the main aim is to keep an area cool by having a water mist going through the fan.

"The Dome will withstand up to 35 mile an hour winds and we can make them up to 30,000 square metres in size – about seven and a half acres," explained Jesse.

HAYTER CHALLENGE

Players continue to be named

Last month we announced that Derek McJannet, Alexander Reid, Ian Buckley and Brian Mulholland would be representing the four home countries in the inaugural Hayter International Cup at West Lincs Golf Club on September 16.

This month we can announce the names of the first international competitors to confirm their attendance.

The GCSAA element of the The Americas team will comprise: Paul McGinnis, GCSAA Vice President; George Renault III, GCSAA Secretary/Treasurer; Gary Grigg, GCSAA Immediate Past President; Randy Nichols, Cherokee Town and Country Club, Atlanta Georgia; Jim Dusch, Atlanta National GC, Alpharetta, Georgia and Sam Williamson, Ojai Valley Inn and Country Club, Ojai, California. The non-playing captain will be Bruce Williams, the GCSAA President, while Steve Mona, GCSAA Chief Executive Officer will also attend.

The Canadian element of the team will comprise Thom Charters, Robert Heron, Doug Meyer and Dean Morrison.

Other competitors will be announced as the event draws nearer.

With many bringing wives or partners to support their team a "Ryder Cup" atmosphere is guaranteed!

The first of the Section qualifiers for the Hayter Challenge are currently being played. Any newsworthy events should be sent to Scott MacCallum at Headquarters for inclusion in the Hayter column.

The final will be played at Fairhaven on September 18.

Pat is new Vice Chairman



Pat Murphy, of Shipley Golf Club in Bingley, West Yorkshire, is the new National Vice Chairman of BIGGA. Pat, who

joined the Board of Management in 1995, is currently Chairman of the Education Sub Committee.

"It came as a complete surprise when Dean Cleaver phoned me

up and asked if I would be Vice Chairman. I nearly fell off my chair and was numb for quite a while after," said Pat.

"My golf club is absolutely delighted. The President of Shipley Golf Club got up at the Northern Section Dinner and said how please they were that I'd been invited to be Vice Chairman and that the club was right behind me."



Prestigious deal goes to Ransomes

St Andrews Links Trust has appointed Ransomes as the exclusive supplier of turf maintenance equipment and light utility vehicles for its courses.

Under the rolling three year agreement the Trust will purchase only Ransomes, Cushman and Ryan equipment to maintain the six courses which form Europe's largest golf complex.

"We are delighted to have signed this exclusive agreement with Ransomes," said Links Manager Ian Forbes.

"A major factor in selecting Ransomes was the company's commitment to golf through the design, manufacture and supply of first class maintenance machinery."

The agreement was secured by Ransomes with invaluable assistance from local distributor, Scottish Grass Machinery which will be responsible for the installation,

servicing and maintenance of the equipment.

"This is a great achievement for Ransomes and for Scottish Grass Machinery," said Managing Director David McNroy. "With Gleneagles already committed to Ransomes, we have now secured exclusive agreements this year with two of the world's finest golfing locations."

The new agreement follows on from another signed with Pebble Beach.

St Andrews Links already has a number of Ransomes machines the most recent of which – a pair of Fairway 300 mowers – were used during last year's Open Championship. Among the first of the new machines to be delivered will be an E-Plex all-electric greens mower, which being virtually silent will enable an earlier start on greens close to the local hotels and houses.



Mommersteeg turfgrass workshop was a sellout

Twenty two greenkeepers recently attended a one day Turfgrass Workshop, organised by Mommersteeg International. The training course, which was the first of its kind to be arranged by the company, was held at the Welsh College of Horticulture.

Course tutor Phil Davies, pictured above, who is Mommersteeg's amenity seeds specialist, was encouraged by the response from the attending greenkeepers. "The North Wales section of BIGGA asked us if we would be prepared to hold the course and it was an overwhelming success."

"We were over subscribed, and the interest and participation from the greenkeepers was very encouraging. It acted as a

useful refresher for many of the attendees who hadn't studied grass identification since their college days."

The workshop included details on the breeding of grasses, identification, and selection of mixtures for different golf course areas.

In addition to the overall success of the day, two attendees were assessed by an independent assessor and verifier in accordance with the Greenkeeper Training Manual regulations and were awarded passes.

Mommersteeg provided a manual on the course contents and presented everyone with a certificate of attendance. The company is investigating holding similar events for greenkeepers in other areas of the country.

Cash boost

Regional Administrator Bob Lupton, left, presents BIGGA Chairman Dean Cleaver with a cheque for £1,000 – raised by the Northern Region for the Association's Building Fund.





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BIGGA courses will help you develop greenkeeping career

Some 250 greenkeepers have discovered that the BIGGA Supervisory Management training courses both at Aldwark Manor and in the Regions can provide them with skills and knowledge to make them better managers.

These courses are not just for those in positions of management but also for the Head Greenkeepers and Course Managers of the future. Several City and Guilds and N/SVQ qualified greenkeepers have spoken about the excellent practical skills that have been taught on these courses.

Because of the very positive feedback received, we have decided to expand the range of courses for 1996/97. Information on the Aldwark Manor five-day residential courses is described in an insert in this magazine, which also acts as an application form. These courses, where costs have been kept to 1994 levels, cover the work that would take several local courses to complete.

The courses are yet another



Education Update

BY KEN RICHARDSON

Learning Experience provided by BIGGA so apply NOW to reserve your place.

The courses at level 3 N/SVQ are:

October 7-11: Managing People Module 1

Computing for Greenkeepers, time management, team building, motivation, delegation, leadership.

October 14-18: Managing People Module 2

Listening and Questioning skills, appraisal, assertive communication, constructive feedback, grievance and discipline, computing for greenkeepers.

October 21-25: Managing Oper-

ations and Resources

Resource planning, estimates, budgets, projects, quality care, competency based qualifications, portfolio development and computing for greenkeepers.

October 28-November 1: Managing Information

Memos and letters, report writing, managing meetings, communication skills, presentation skills, computing for greenkeepers

These level 3 courses run from Monday lunchtime to lunchtime on Friday and include all food and accommodation. Delegates and employers receive a certificate of attendance.

November 4-8: Managing Finance and Management of Health & Safety

Controlling Budgets, expense reports, reforecasting, cash flow forecasting, use of spreadsheets, computing for finance

This level 4 course runs from Monday lunchtime to lunchtime on Friday and includes all food

and accommodation. Delegates and employers receive a certificate of attendance.

The cost of each course, including, four breakfasts, five lunches four dinners and four nights accommodation plus all tuition fees is the very low £ 425 + VAT for BIGGA members; £490 + VAT for non BIGGA members

Details of the next series of local supervisory management courses will appear in June's edition of *Greenkeeper International*.

Planning is well under way for the Learning Experience 1997. In association with Ransomes, this event will comprise the National Education Conference, four Workshops and a full Seminar programme.

We will also run a chairman of green/secretaries course in cooperation with the STRI.

Do you have any suggestions for subjects, titles, themes or speakers for future events? If so, fill in the form enclosed with this magazine and return it to BIGGA HQ.

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