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DECEMBER 1996

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Mentmore's Head Greenkeeper Mark Ellis and his team are slowly winning their fight against heavy clay soils on their two courses. And if you think Mark's face is familiar, look again. You might indeed recognise him **Pages 40-41**



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Fintan Brennan is the new Toro/PGA European Tour Student Greenkeeper of the Year after a hard fought contest which could have seen any one of the finalists the winner **Pages 10-11**

One man went to mow

Rabbits used to be the erratic and unreliable means of keeping turf short enough on which to play golf... until along came the mower. Roland Taylor charts its history **Pages 18-19**

Looking forward to BTME 97

There's only a month or so to go until all eyes focus on Harrogate for yet another record-breaking BTME. We look ahead to what's in store..... **Pages 21-30**

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BIGGA in focus BIGGA is about to reach a memorable landmark - the Association will be ten years old in January. Neil Thomas reports **Page 4**

News Big-hearted greenkeepers raise cash for charity... SISIS stalwart retires after 36 years... others reach 25 years and are still going strong... the new BIGGA recommended salary scale... all the news from our industry.. **Pages 5, 7, 9**

Education A year which began with the Learning Experience in Harrogate is about to end with that same prospect in sight. Ken Richardson reflects on the achievements of 1996 and looks ahead to new challenges in 1997..... **Page 10**

Cover

Fintan Brennan, this year's Toro/PGA European Tour Student Greenkeeper of the Year
Picture by Frank Gavin

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GREENKEEPER

International

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GREENKEEPER

International

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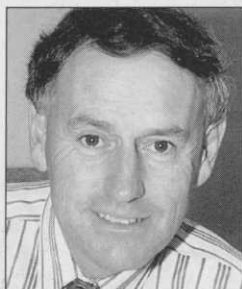
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The second decade begins...

As the bells chime to welcome in the New Year, BIGGA will be ten years old. Formally constituted on 1 January 1987 it hardly seems credible that the years have flown past so rapidly and the Association is now celebrating its tenth anniversary. A time then to reflect and to look forward.

Reflecting over the past decade there have been some heady times and also some low ones. Yet it has been a story of steady advance from small beginnings. An initial 1,200 members from the three former associations has grown to 6,200 and BIGGA now offers its members comprehensive services and benefits. Our education and training programmes are the envy of other professional bodies and we communicate and inform through our award winning magazine *Greenkeeper International*. The annual BIGGA Turf Management Exhibition is the highlight of the year for the Greenkeeping profession and acknowledged by the industry as the leading indoor exhibition of its kind in Europe. I am sure that this all sounds self-congratulatory but rest assured that a high degree of realism permeates the corridors of BIGGA's headquarters. If BIGGA now enjoys some relatively prosperous times it was not always so and much was learnt from some salutary experiences which is reflected today in the way the organisation is run and how we conduct our business. I use the word business advisedly for, although a professional association, the hardest lesson of all that was learnt in the formative years of BIGGA was that we were subject to commercial realities and of necessity had to be run on business lines. Today the systems are in place to ensure our competitiveness and to avoid those early pitfalls which threatened to undermine our development.

Much time could be spent on reflection but essentially it is a time to look forward. The greenkeeping profession has taken giant steps forward in the past ten years particularly in terms of its professionalism and its status within the game of golf. Yet much remains to be done. The signs are encouraging for the future as



BIGGA in focus

BY NEIL THOMAS

indicated by two events I recently attended. The Toro/PGA European Tour Student Greenkeeper of the Year Award has been running since 1989 and is now well established in the greenkeeping calendar. It was rewarding therefore to experience the ever-increasing calibre of the student greenkeepers within the profession. An excellent winner this year will uphold the best traditions of the award while it is pertinent to point out that the two runners up are only 20 years of age. The greenkeeping world lies before all three and, in talking at length with them, one is left with the impression that the future of the profession is in safe hands if we continue to produce the young, articulated and well trained greenkeepers who are now perceiving greenkeeping to be an attractive career option.

The second event was a meeting of the South Coast Section to which I was invited last month. This was a well-attended meeting and many were the informed questions in relation to the run-

ning of the Association and our future direction. The meeting demonstrated the commitment of so many members to BIGGA and this can only hold us in good stead for the future. Here is a well-organised section and BIGGA continues to depend on its sections and regions to provide the organisational structure at "grass roots" level to support our large and growing membership. One pointer for the future is the need for more members to be active within their local sections. Too much work and responsibility placed on too few is not the way forward, while the sharing of tasks generally contributes to a section's vitality and development.

On a personal note it was a pleasure to meet up again with Eric James one of the profession's longest serving members and a member of BIGGA's first Board of Management back in 1987. He seemed in fine fettle and it was reassuring to note his continued enthusiasm and to be reminded of the continuity Eric and others have provided in the development and progress of the profession over many years.

A few final thoughts on the future. Perhaps first and foremost is the issue of job security for our members. In recent years golf has offered more employment opportunities as a fast-growing sport. Yet, conversely, greenkeeper jobs seem to have become less secure. There are huge pressures and demands these days from golf club members but often the termination of employment is the result of ill-informed judgments and failure to understand the technicalities and complexities of

today's greenkeeping world. Whether it be the implementation of legislation or the effects of prevailing weather conditions, there is a need to communicate and inform and BIGGA will need to work with golf clubs and their green committees in the days ahead.

Environmental matters are well to the forefront in our planning with a new video to be launched at the BTME and BIGGA will continue to pursue a leading role in the debate on environmental and ecological management of the golf course.

The education and training of greenkeepers will continue as the Association's flagship and it will be incumbent on the ambitious greenkeeper to be trained in management and supervisory as well as greenkeeping skills if career progress is to be successfully pursued. Some of BIGGA's members are now competing for top jobs at golf courses such as General or Estate Managers and this is a trend I see continuing and being accentuated in the future. Look, too, for opportunities in Europe as the newly-formed Federation of European Golf Greenkeepers Associations (FEGGA) brings greenkeeping and greenkeepers throughout Europe closer together.

Lastly, and in the immediate future, BIGGA will be looking to build a new headquarter's office – a prestige building to take the Association into the 21st Century and to serve its members in future generations. So as its second decade begins, BIGGA can indeed hold its head up high and look forward to exciting times and challenges ahead.

New irrigation system for Stoke Poges

Stoke Poges Golf Club has signed a £500,000 contract with Turf Irrigation Services for a comprehensive new golf course irrigation system using Toro equipment. The existing 26 year old system which waters greens and tees will be replaced with irrigation to all fairways, greens, greens approaches and the driving range.

The system will use a combination of Toro sprinklers which have been chosen to meet the particular irriga-

tion requirements of the course. The use of Toro PC based control and pop-up sprinklers which can be operated individually, will ensure accurate and effective placement of water, thereby proving the most efficient and cost effective irrigation.

Stoke Poges Golf Club has received planning permission for the construction and restoration of an additional nine holes. This will recreate the historic Harry Shapland Colt

layout which dates from 1908. The club changed hands in 1993 and since that time £5 million has been spent on restoring the Grade I listed clubhouse, the surrounding gardens, which include a Repton Bridge (1799) and "Capability" Brown Cascades (1750), and the golf course to their former glory.

The extra nine holes and additional facilities will cost a further £4 million over the next 12 months.

As I see it...

BY DEAN CLEAVER
BIGGA CHAIRMAN

This has been a busy month for me involving trips to Switzerland, Scotland and France. It just hasn't slowed down since my year began and I've enjoyed so much wonderful hospitality I've put on half a stone since January!

My trip to Switzerland was to represent FEGGA at the International Greenkeepers Association Conference in Interlachen. The IGA consists of German, Swiss and Austrian greenkeepers and it is possible that the Association will be wound up with the members putting their support behind FEGGA.

It was a wonderful trip and I was able to visit Gstaad, the exclusive ski resort, and also went up in the cable car which featured in the fight seen in the James Bond film *On her Majesty's Secret Service*. Some of the views were just unbelievable.

The downside of being in Switzerland was that I missed the Toro/PGA European Tour Student Greenkeeper of the Year final and I must thank Pat Murphy for standing in for me. Congratulations to all the finalists and, in particular, Fintan Brennan who won the title. One of my assistants, Noel Greene was runner-up along with John Bachelor from Mendip Spring GC. I am really proud of Noel and he's quite a celebrity at the golf club at the moment.

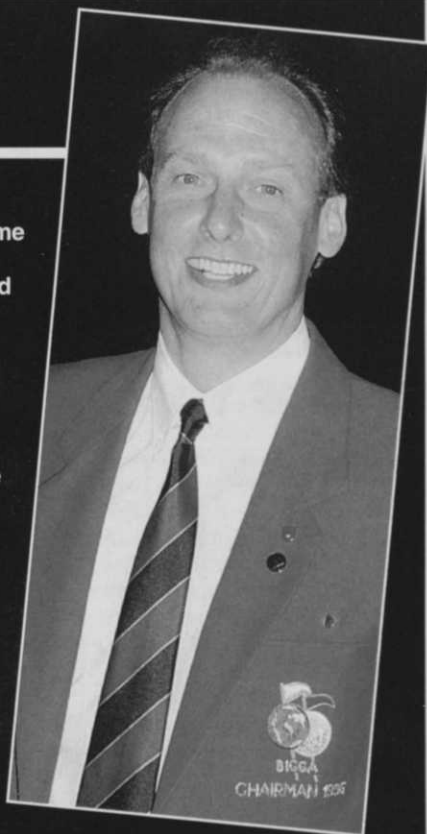
Returning from Switzerland it was straight on to the Midland Seminar where it was nice to take my staff along with me. It would have been good to have seen more people there but those who did attend got quite a bit out of the day.

I also had the chance to attend Scotsturf for a day. It was an excellent exhibition and with spending some time on the BIGGA stand it was a good opportunity to see a lot of old friends again.

The latest FEGGA meeting was held in Bordeaux and although a French air strike caused a few travel problems for some of those attending it was an extremely successful meeting. Everything is moving a lot faster than anyone thought it would and there will be much to report at the Federation's AGM during Harrogate.

I also attended the 10th anniversary dinner of the French Greenkeepers Association held in the function room of the wine Mecca Chateau Lafitte, which was quite an experience... Particularly as everyone complained about the wine! It was red but served chilled and there were even mentions about it in the speeches.

It just remains for me to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a wonderfully prosperous New Year.



NEWS



The St Catherine's Hospice in Crawley West Sussex benefited to the tune of £1,342.50 thanks to the efforts of the Sussex and Surrey Section members and patrons at the BIGGA Charity Day at Birch Grove.

The companies involved in the day were White Horse Contractors, Watermation, Banks Horticultural Products, Donald Steel and Co Ltd, Colas and CJ Collins

Construction Ltd and the cheque was presented to St Catherine's by Raymond Day, Chairman of Sussex Section. It is hoped that the event will be repeated next year. For the record Surrey won the Inter County Charity Cup.

● Picture shows Ray Day presenting the cheque to Jane Howard, Community Fund Raiser and Susan Town, Fund Raising and Communications Manager.

SISIS stalwart set to retire after 36 years



The retirement of Arthur Harrison, Sales Director, this month will indeed be the "end of an era" as he is the last person still

with SISIS who worked at the original factory in Cheadle, Cheshire.

Arthur joined the company in March 1960 at the start of an important decade for SISIS, seeing the first forays into export. By 1974 SISIS were well established in Europe and Scandinavia and it was time to look further afield. Arthur Harrison elected to go to Japan, Hong Kong and Singapore on a trade mission sponsored by the Manchester Chamber of Commerce. Since that time he has taken a special interest in the company's dealings in the Far East

and Japan is still one of SISIS' major markets.

In his 36 years at SISIS, Arthur has seen many changes, including three factory moves and led the sales team at literally hundreds of exhibitions all over the world.

Even in retirement Arthur has no plans to settle into his armchair. He and his wife Marie have organised the garden to withstand long periods of absence for the various overseas trips they are planning and caravan jaunts in the UK. They will also be able to see more of their three grandchildren.

At the 1996 SALTEX exhibition, a "farewell" dinner party was attended by SISIS export distributors from Hong Kong, Australia, Canada, Sweden, Eire, Northern Ireland, Netherlands, Germany, and USA.

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The East Midlands Section has donated £500 towards the BIGGA Building Fund out of Section Funds. It is the second consecutive year that the Section has made a donation to the Fund. Last year it was £300. The picture shows Tim Allard (right), Chairman of the Section, presenting John Pemberton, BIGGA's Administration Manager, with the cheque.

It's 25 not out for loyal golf course personnel

In modern times 25 years in the same job is quite a rarity and it says much for the loyalty of both employer and employee that it happens at all.

However two golf clubs not too many miles apart have recently celebrated such an anniversary. Lyndon Upham, Course Manager at Gog Magog, just south of Cambridge, and Roy Alderton, Head Greenkeeper at Flempton, just outside Bury St Edmunds, have an unblemished combined 50 years service.

For Lyndon it was a double celebration with he and his wife Denise enjoying their silver wedding anniversary also in 1996.

"There have been many highlights during the 25 years. The most memorable was being introduced to Prince Edward on his visit to the club to present Duke of Edinburgh Awards."

He was presented with a watch by the Club Captain and a Ship's



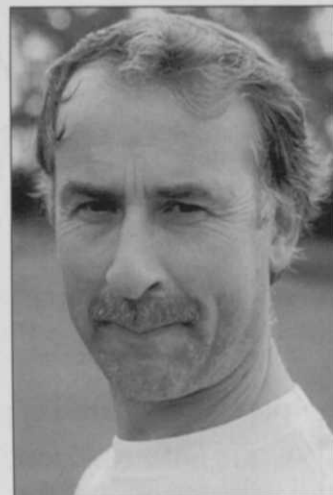
Decanter, on behalf of the staff, by the Chairman of Greens.

Roy arrived at Flempton as First Assistant at the age of 20 and has never regretted moving to the course, which has been described as one of the finest nine hole courses in the country – it boasts 80 pot bunkers.

"The committee will tell me what they want and then let me get on with it in my own time and in the way I wish to do it," he explained.

The Club presented Roy with an inscribed gold watch and a wall clock.

● Pictured above, centre, Lyndon Upham with colleagues of Gog Magog Golf Club



Roy Alderton of Flempton Golf Club

JUST A THOUGHT

If you work for an organisation that makes its decisions by committee, make sure that you are on the committee.



MERRY CHRISTMAS

Taken from Life's Little Instruction Volume II compiled by H. Jackson Brown, Jr. published by Harper Collins

BIGGA RECOMMENDED MINIMUM SALARY SCALE 1997

The Association has updated its recommended minimum salary scale in line with the latest Retail Prices Index Figure available which is 2.1% for 1996. The quoted rates apply from 1 January 1997 but any variance from the above RPI figure at the time of implementation should be taken into account. Figures in brackets are 1996 rates.

	18 Holes	27 Holes	36 Holes
Course Manager/Head Greenkeeper	£20,300 (£19,850)	£22,100 (£21,600)	£24,750 (£24,200)
Deputy Course Manager/ Deputy Head Greenkeeper	£14,600 (£14,300)	£15,950 (£15,600)	£17,850 (£17,450)
First Assistant	£12,650 (£12,376)	£12,650 (£12,376)	£12,650 (£12,376)
Assistant Greenkeeper: aged 21 and over	£11,900 (£11,648)	£11,900 (£11,648)	£11,900 (£11,648)
Assistant Greenkeeper: aged 20	£10,413 (£10,192)	£10,413 (£10,192)	£10,413 (£10,192)
Assistant Greenkeeper: aged 19	£8,925 (£8,736)	£8,925 (£8,736)	£8,925 (£8,736)
Assistant Greenkeeper: aged 18	£7,438 (£7,280)	£7,438 (£7,280)	£7,438 (£7,280)
Assistant Greenkeeper: aged 16/17	£5,950 (£5,824)	£5,950 (£5,824)	£5,950 (£5,824)

The First Assistant post is a post designed to recognise a third-in-charge where relevant to the size of the Club. In cases where the First Assistant is the recognised Deputy, the Deputy Course Manager/Deputy Head Greenkeeper salary scale should apply.

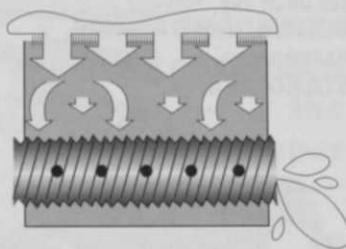
Basic conditions of employment should include:

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- Retirement Pension Scheme.
- Time off to attend training courses, demonstrations, BIGGA functions and tournaments.
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It has been agreed that the Association will form a working party to review the salary scale in general for 1998.

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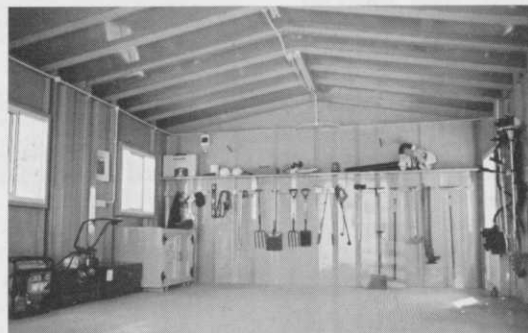
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Chris calls for support

The following appeared in the **Surrey Herald** and also the **PGA European Tour weekly mailout** which goes to all media and golf associations around the world.

Wentworth Course Superintendent Chris Kennedy has issued a heartfelt plea for Europe's beleaguered greenkeepers to be allowed "more tolerance and understanding".

Kennedy, one of the most respected figures in golf, was

speaking as his hard working team, led by Graham Matheson, made their final preparations on the eve of the Toyota World Match Play Championship.

Wentworth is the only club in Britain who stage two major international events in the same year, and Kennedy knows all too well the fierce media spotlight focused on the famous West Course.

"For us, a major tournament is like facing a very public examination paper and we have to sit it

twice a year," he explained. "I can understand that these days the players are competing for a vast amount of money and prestige and they want everything to be right for them to play. By the same token, however, they must realise that there is no one more upset than the greenkeeper if the course is not in perfect order.

"No-one needs to tell us if our greens aren't right - we live with it 24 hours a day and we eat drink and sleep the job."

Kennedy was reacting to criticisms of European courses that came to a head in the row over conditions for the Volvo German Open at Stuttgart and the One 2 One British Masters at Collingtree Park, in August

"My heart bled for the lads at Collingtree and it was certainly a case of 'there but for the grace of God go we'," he declared.

"Alistair Connall, my opposite number there, had to make a professional decision, and he was just unlucky that all the elements conspired against him. They had staged a successful Seniors event just three weeks before and they wanted to cut the greens down to get the right speed for a European Tour event.

"The minute you cut down to an eighth of an inch or less you are putting the grass plant under great stress, especially when the greens are pure sand based. They were then hit by extreme temperatures in the high 80s and low 90s and the grass just could not recover quickly enough. No one

wants these things to happen, but people have to understand that in this country especially we are at the mercy of the weather.

"Some of the players cite America as having much better and more standardised playing conditions. But they forget how big America is and how they can arrange their calendar to always play where the best conditions are. Even then, with all their sophisticated preparation, things can go wrong as we saw when last year's Ryder Cup was almost wrecked by rain at Rochester.

"The weather in Britain has been much more extreme in recent years. We hardly seem to have a gradual spring or autumn any more. This year we went straight out of a very tough cold winter into almost drought conditions and we had to use three times the normal amount of top dressing to make sure the putting surfaces were right for the Volvo PGA Championship at the end of May.

"At Loch Lomond a few weeks ago one player shot a 66 in the morning but then a fierce wind blew up the loch and the players who went out in the afternoon faced a terrible task. It was no one's fault. It just proved how much nature can affect our sport. In an ideal world we would always like to prepare our courses at the right time of the year and always in benign conditions, but we know real life is not like that."

● Re-printed with kind permission from John Whitbread of the Surrey Herald.

NEWS IN BRIEF

The winner of the recent **Jacobsen Flash Attach Challenge** is **Rob Weaver** who is pictured receiving his prizes from **Peter Bell**, General Manager, Jacobsen E-Z-GO UK.

The Flash Attach Challenge was held to highlight the new quick release, no tools system fitted to the GreensKing V, which allows a cutting unit to be changed in seconds. Rob Weaver who works for Brophy, one of the largest grounds maintenance contractors in the UK, managed a startling time of 15 seconds. He was rewarded with vouchers, a Jacobsen jacket and a commemorative 75 year anniversary baseball cap.



Peter Bell commented "I was very pleased to present Rob Weaver with his prizes and feel that this record breaking time highlights the ease of maintenance on the GreensKing V."

Ronan Rafferty has teamed up with Martin Gillett, an Associate of the British Institute of Golf Course Architects to form Rafferty Gillett a practice which will offer golf course design and architecture, project management and consultancy services as previously provided by Martin Gillett but with the opportunity to commission Ronan Rafferty as a design consultant.

Andy Toomey and John Cook, of Crondon Park, experienced Ryder Cup style pressure when they represented their club in the final stages of the *Mail on Sunday* Golf Club Classic in France.

The two had played excellent golf to help Crondon into the final four at the final played at Champ de Bataille in Normandy and although they lost in the semi final to Hill Valley they were part of the team which clinched third place against Llantrisant & Ponyclun.

BIGGA SUBSCRIPTION RATES FROM 1 JANUARY 1997

	1997	1996
Course Manager/Head Greenkeeper	£68.00	£67.00
Deputy Course Manager/Deputy Head Greenkeeper	£55.00	£54.00
Greens staff aged 21 years and over	£48.00	£47.00
Greens staff aged 20 years and under	£30.00	£30.00
Full Time Students	£15.00	£15.00
Retired after 31/3/96 (Full benefits maintained)	£25.00	£25.00
Retired pre 31/3/96 (Full benefits maintained)	£15.00	£15.00
(if in receipt of magazine otherwise FOC)		
Retired after 31.3.96 No magazine or benefits	FOC	FOC
Life	FOC	FOC
International	£55.00	£54.00
Associate/Company with magazine	£55.00	£54.00
Associate/Company without magazine	£29.00	£28.00
Unemployed	£20.00	N/A

It has been agreed that the Association will form a working party to review the subscription rates for 1998.

(mis)adventures of Gordon the Greenkeeper

This budget was set in 1958 and we didn't hear the greenkeeper moan then!

Disciplinary hearing? We may be able to help

The LEGAL HELPLINE can advise you

Greenkeeper Members call the LEGAL HELP LINE for FREE advice
English Law: 0990 234500 Scottish Law: 0141 332 2887

Yet another benefit of BIGGA membership

A very busy 1996: and another full year ahead

This month's article looks back at Education and Training related activities during 1996 and looks forward to 1997.

It does not seem possible that the year has almost come to an end and Harrogate is only seven weeks away. This year started with the Learning Experience, with the week starting with the National Education Conference and the welcome return of two workshops. Workshop 1 on Golf Course Design, Construction and Maintenance was extremely popular, so much so that we had to stop taking applications in early December. We therefore decided to run this workshop again in 1997. Unfortunately, for those slow to apply, this workshop is again full and we are not accepting any more applications. The National Education Conference was a great success with speakers from around the world, entertaining over one hundred and fifty delegates. The last three days saw the seminar programme run for the last time in the Royal Hall. We have had problems with heating such a large theatre and 1997 will see in a new venue.

February and March saw the continuation of the very successful Regional Supervisory Management Courses run for us by Brin Bendon and Frank Newberry. The autumn/winter/spring period sessions allowed more than 180 greenkeepers to gain knowledge and practise the skills of supervisory management and, thanks to the contributors to the Education and Development Fund, at a very, very low price. Sami Collins joined me as Education Assistant in March and was soon involved in administrating training courses.

April and May saw the entries rushing in for the TORO/Lely/PGA European Tour Student of the Year Competition. This competition has got better each year and the overall standard of this years regional finalists made it very difficult for the Regional Judges to select the eight National Finalists. This competition always gives me a boost as I get to see the people



Education Update

BY KEN RICHARDSON

who represent the future of greenkeeping and from what I have seen over three years, there are exciting times ahead. Congratulations to Fintan Brennan, John Bachelor and Noel Green on their success this year. Watch out at BTME for details of the 1997 Competition.

June, July and August, the so called quiet months saw us beginning the filming for BIGGA's next training video, preparing for the next round of Supervisory Management Course, arranging course visits for the Miracle Greenkeeper of the Year Competition and administering the Master Greenkeeper scheme.

Thanks to the contributors to the Education and Development Fund, BIGGA will be launching three more training aids. Its new training video, designed to complement the very successful book, *A Practical Guide to Ecological Management on the Golf Course*, which will look at the process of conducting an ecological survey, production of a management plan and the methods of ecological management, the latest *On Course Field Guide*, which looks at grass identification and the relaunch of the pests and diseases guide which has proven to be very popular.

That brought us to September when I travelled around the Regions, judging the Regional Finalists for the Student of the Year, continued filming for the new video and began the production of a grass identification guide.

October and November started with the first three of this autumn's supervisory management courses, in Scotland, quickly followed by two weeks of residential courses here at Aldwark Manor, then more regional supervisory management courses.

That brings us back to Decem-

ber, where I started this article, and the start of a look to the future. Unfortunately, my crystal ball in broken and Mystic Meg is fully committed to the National Lottery but I will do my best.

The Learning Experience at Harrogate has been expanded yet again with four workshops and the National Education Conference taking place over the first two days ie 20 and 21 January. As I have mentioned before, Workshop 1 (Golf Course Design Construction and Maintenance) is now full but we still have places on Workshop 2 (Levelling and Surveying), Workshop 3 (Effective Communication-Presenting to Green Committees) and Workshop 4, a one day workshop, (The Magic of Greenkeeping). All four workshops and the National Education Conference take place in the Majestic Hotel, which will be BIGGA's Headquarters for the full week. We are again presenting a Chairmen of Green/Secretaries Course, on Tuesday 21 and Wednesday 22 January, in cooperation with the STRI. This course has been modified this year following comments from last year's delegates, and will include an input from Billy McMillan. This year sees the move of the Seminar programme from the Royal Hall to the Kings Suite, which is under Hall D. All four workshops, the National Education Conference and Seminars will, once again, attract Master Greenkeeper credits and BASIS Continuing Professional Development points. Full details of the Education Programme and Social activities is elsewhere in this magazine.

When we get back from Harrogate, the process will start all over again so that we will continue to provide quality education and training opportunities for greenkeepers.

Those attending a two day workshop will receive four credits, two for a one day workshop while each half day seminar session in the Education Conference will be worth two credits and the BTME Seminar programme worth five credits.

Irish

The Celtic connection shone through at the Toro/PGA European Tour Student of the Year Final with an Irishman from a Scottish college claiming the top prize.

Well that's it. The cat's out of the bag and the formula to success in the Toro/PGA European Tour Student Greenkeeper of the Year is now available to everyone. Postcards to a Mr Fintan Brennan, Dublin, Ireland.

So what is this big secret which can turn a man into a winner and give him a reference on his CV which only very few can boast?

Here it is:- Take a pinch of ambition, add a dash of application and a dose of determination, add two tablespoonfuls of talent to taste... oh yes, and be prepared to make sacrifices.

It was a recipe which all eight of the 1996 finalists had used "exceedingly" well to present the judges with the most difficult task of identifying a winner they have had to face.

However, the man whose particular combination of ingredients proved a winner was the aforementioned Fintan Brennan, Deputy Head Greenkeeper at Portmarnock Hotel and Golf Links.

Fintan proved his ambition at his interview for his job at Portmarnock when he looked Head Greenkeeper Peter Casbolt straight in the eye and in answer to the question what do you see yourself doing in future said, "Your job." That convinced Peter that Fintan was the man for the job and nothing has changed his mind from that initial impression.

His application and determination were also proved when his dedication to his studies won him awards at college and his talent shone through in his second year when he won the Barenbrug Student of the Year Award and was promoted to Deputy Head Greenkeeper after less than two years in greenkeeping.

Sacrifices? Fintan is married with two children, Mike, six, and Joe, two and a half, yet his college courses took place on block release over the Irish Sea, far removed from his home comforts at Elmwood, in Cupar, Fife.

"I was away from home for a total of 19 weeks over the last two