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FEBRUARY 1996

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...And then the great man said, let us spray

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When Mark Anderson, Head Greenkeeper at Newbury Race Course Golf Club, talks about "flexibility", he brings a new meaning to the word. **Pages 31-34**

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Cover

Pictures from BIGGA's main event – and there's more inside

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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GREENKEEPER International

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WIN £50 CASH IN OUR BUYER'S GUIDE COMPETITION: TURN TO PAGE 47

Greenkeeper Education and Development Fund

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 01347 838581.

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Here's to the next time

SUNDAY JANUARY 21

It's that time of year again, BTME week. For some reason I appear to be taking an over keen interest in the TV weather bulletins but then before the week is out... Off to the Majestic Hotel where Ken and Sami are busying themselves with preparations for registration. Conference set looks impressive. Registration goes smoothly with everyone seeming to be impressed with the new conference folders. Our international guests arrive and join us for an excellent dinner. I end up on a table which produces an interesting debate between Jeff Collinge and Billy McMillan – nobody else had much chance to speak. The week seems set fair but you couldn't say the same about the weather – it's cold outside.

MONDAY

Conference and Workshop One are off to a good start but our lecturer for Workshop Two on Stress Management Techniques, Brin Bendon, is missing. 9am rolls on to 9.20am and I am feeling distinctly stressed. Ken is growing paler by the minute. Finally Brin's car is spotted and we help him out, broken ankle and all. He had been planning for a 9.30am start. Stress levels are running high. Should be a good workshop – wish I could go. The day goes well, while a conference highlight is the presentation of Master Greenkeeper Certificates to John Wells and David Winterton. So to the conference dinner with speeches from the Chairman and Peter Wilson from Ransomes followed by an hilarious after dinner speaker in David Gunson – the ex-air traffic controller had flown all the big names including Buddy Holly, Jim Reeves and Ricky Valence... A good end to the day – but it's getting colder...

TUESDAY

Down to the George Hotel at 8.30am for the start of the Chairman of Greens/Secretaries course. Sense of déjà vu. First lecturer from the STRI has failed to arrive. Course introduction is delayed for 15 minutes until a breathless Tim Lodge arrives. Car problems. My immediate thought is to join



BIGGA in focus

BY NEIL THOMAS

Brin Bendon's workshop. Day Two continues well with an early indication of Joe Vargas' talents... Short Board of Management meeting with Dean Cleaver elected as Chairman and then off to the exhibitors' cheese and wine gathering. The third annual Hayter Dinner in the George Hotel follows, superbly organised by Kim Macfie and Barbara Garton. This event is now a Tuesday fixture during BTME and not to be missed. I walk back to the Majestic Hotel – am I becoming paranoid about the weather?

WEDNESDAY

Here we go. 8.15am and Hall A is already well populated. Board Members arrive and the Chairman, broken leg, fractured

shoulder and all, is ready for the ribbon-cutting ceremony. The Chairman's ever present wheelchair pusher and minder, Per-Olof, is also in attendance. Our Swedish friends are much appreciated. The ribbon is cut and great numbers hurry in.

11am – first flurries of snow. I'm on the phone to Leeds Weather Centre – assured there is little to worry about. Viscount Whitelaw arrives for Chairman's luncheon and tour of the exhibition – his enthusiasm for BIGGA knows no bounds. Off to the AGM. Revised Constitution and Rules are approved – we continue to move forward. This year the karaoke night actually takes place. Sami's been hiding her singing talents – she seems almost semi-professional. I refuse to become involved but I should have known better. There's obviously been an orchestrated attempt to get me on board with the 'BIGGA Boys' and I have no option but to join in a terrible rendering of 'Uptown Girl'. The evening is highlighted by one of Joe Vargas' other talents – the appearance of 'Elvis Presley' in full regalia brings the house down – a great evening noted for repeat next year. It's now very cold indeed.

THURSDAY

7.30am BTME Steering Commit-

tee. Well supported even if all brains are not totally functioning at this early hour. Business completed at 7.55am just as fire alarm goes off and hotel evacuated. We eventually return to a hot breakfast. Exhibition is again very busy but complaints about heating in the Royal Hall – note to consider alternative venue for 1997. The International Symposium takes a great stride forward towards the probable formation of a European Golf Greenkeepers Association to represent the interests of greenkeepers throughout Europe. Off to the banquet. The numbers are swelling at the doors long before kick-off time for this 'sold out' climax to the week. For a year I have lived with the fears that it will not reach the standard of last year with Tom O'Connor and Linda Nolan. My fears are groundless. Lyn Paul sets the standard, a great voice and, as we found talking to her after the show, a really nice lady. Stan Boardman was on top form giving a great performance. This event really has become a social highlight of the year for both our members and the companies. Book early for 1997. A late night for many and it's no longer just cold outside...

FRIDAY

A thin white blanket of snow but nothing to worry about as yet. The bleary eyed faithful arrive at the Exhibition Halls and Joe Vargas attracts a good audience to his seminar. Much talk of the previous evening's banquet and show begins to turn to talk of the weather. The flurries are increasing. I pull the plug on the show an hour early at 12.30pm. The evacuation of equipment and personnel is impressive. Late afternoon and the snow is setting in. 24 hours later it is still snowing but its all over and I can stop taking the tablets. We made it and it's been a great week.

Thanks to everyone who contributed to the success and particularly to our exhibitors without whom there would be no BTME.

I hope they had a successful week and are planning to return. Our planning for 1997 is already underway – here's to the next time.

Geof Hills: a tribute

It is with much regret that I have to advise members of the passing of Geof Hills, Regional Administrator for the South East Region. Geof was taken ill on the Friday morning of the BTME and admitted to hospital in Harrogate where he subsequently passed away early the following day. Geof joined the staff of BIGGA in May 1995 as the first employee Regional Administrator covering the South East Region. Geof had followed a varied and interesting career path which included duties as an inspector in the Northern Rhodesian police as well as ten years in that country as a Game Ranger. His early career had been in the role of greenkeeper/professional at Bexley Hill Golf Club and in the

1980s he became Course Manager at the West Lake Golf Club in Cape Town before in 1987 taking up the post of Secretary/Manager at Sene Valley Golf Club in Folkestone.

Geof had settled well into his role as Regional Administrator and was well-liked by all who came into contact with him. He had a quiet, courteous and efficient manner and quickly became very committed to the cause of BIGGA. He greatly enjoyed BTME week which had given him the opportunity to meet many of the South East Region's members. Geof had much to offer the Association and he will be sadly missed. We send our deepest sympathy to Marianne, his sister Pam and all his family.

An Open invitation to help at big event

Applications are invited from members to join BIGGA's Greenkeeping Support team for the Open Championship at Royal Lytham & St Annes GC.

Members wishing to be considered must be working greenkeepers and should be available from Wednesday evening July 17 to Sunday evening July 21, 1996. The opportunity to take part in the most important golf event of the year is open both to team members from previous years and also those members who are wishing to participate for the first time.

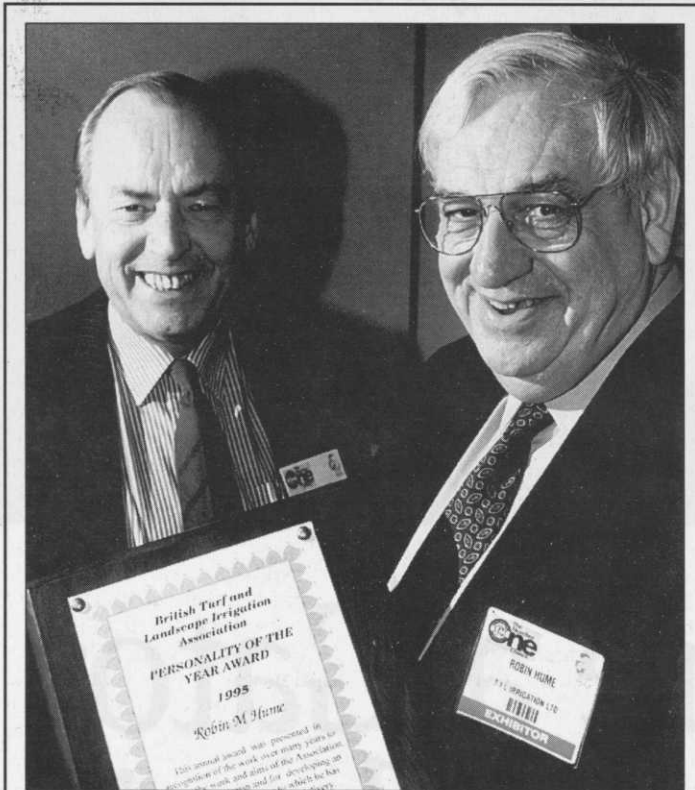
Duties will be allocated on a rota basis over the four days of play and include early morning course preparation, bunker raking while matches are in play and evening course maintenance. Members may also be asked to co-operate with the gathering of information for distribution in the Press Centre which helps raise the profile of the Association at the Championship. All members of the Support Team will be expected to remain on the course throughout the day and be available in the event of any unforeseen circumstances arising.

Accommodation, all meals and transport will be provided by the Association but successful applicants will be expected to pay their own travelling expenses from home to the Championship and return.

Those members wishing to be involved should put their names forward in writing to John Pemberton, Administration Manager at BIGGA's HQ, Aldwark Manor, Aldwark, Alne, York YO6 2NF to be received no later than March 18, 1996. All candidates' names will then be placed into a draw to select the successful applicants.

If you have not been to this event before in this capacity and wish to learn more about what will be expected please do not hesitate to contact either John Tel: 01347 838581, Bert Cross Tel: 0151 7245412 or Elliott Small Tel: 01259 731445.

NEWS



Robin Hume has been named the first British Turf and Irrigation Association (BTLIA) Personality of the Year. The award was presented during BTME 96.

"Robin was nominated for this new award in recognition of his outstanding contribution in assisting in the establishment of BTLIA sponsored educational courses in irrigation," said Association Chairman Philip York.

"Robin not only helped to provide the framework for the development of block courses, designed to promote a greater understanding of the turf irrigation techniques, he used and continues to use his extensive knowledge, gained in this country and in many parts of the world," he added.

'Food blender' tackles debris

Charterhouse Turf Machinery's latest import, the Eliet shredder, is giving golf courses the chance to re-cycle general debris and use it as compost or walkway material.

The shredder works in the same way as a large food blender with 24 reversible blades mounted on a 500mm shaft at compound angles. It drives at 3000 RPM and will digest virtually any vegetation. The different gratings, with varying apertures, are available to produce ideal results for any type of material.

Further information can be obtained from Charterhouse Turf Machinery Tel: 01428 661222.

Charterhouse Turf Machinery Ltd, in conjunction with Dowdeswell Engineering are pleased to announce the signing of an agreement for future development and cooperation.

Initially Charterhouse will be marketing the Dowdeswell Titan range of Spikers together with the Dowdeswell Roller Mowers and the re-designed Dowdeswell Camcorer.

FLYING DIVOTS

■ Bert Senior, who worked for Parker Hart for over 40 years, has died at the age of 68. Bert was Tractor Workshop Manager at the company's Worcester Park Headquarters for many years and spent the last four years working part time in the Sales Department. He is survived by his wife Sheila.

■ York based company Rolawn (Turf Growers) Ltd has taken legal action to prevent another turf grower from infringing its Rolawn trademark when another company began advertising as "Rollon Turf" and "Roll On Turf".

In the High Court of Justice in London Mr Justice Jacob order that Mr Alan Le Blond of Sunderland Tyne & Wear be restrained from infringing Rolawn's registered trade mark and that Mr Le Blonds use of the terms "Rollon" and "Roll On" infringed Rolawn's trade mark. He also ordered that Mr Le Blond should pay Rolawn's costs in bringing the action.

"Rolawn's management and staff have spent over 20 years working extremely hard to build up the company's brand name and top class reputation. We are simply not prepared to allow anyone to misuse our good name," said Rolawn's Sales and Marketing Director Terry Ryan.

■ Rolawn is offering a reward of £5,000 for information regarding two break-ins in a week at the Elvington Headquarters at the end of January. On each occasion valuable computer equipment was stolen. Anyone with information should call Terry Ryan on 01904 608661.

■ Phil Chiverton, Course Manager at The Buckinghamshire Golf Club, who featured in December's Greenkeeper International, has been named Employee of the Year by the club's owners and has won a trip to the company headquarters in Japan.

■ The photograph of the Toro greens mower which appeared on the January Issue of Greenkeeper International was not, as it should have been, a Toro 3200-D but a much older machine. We apologise for the confusion caused by this error.



Where a Gator goes is your business

How you choose to use a John Deere Gator utility vehicle is entirely up to you.

For some, a Gator is meant to roam on the delicate turf of a golf course. Others view it as the ultimate caravan park vehicle. And there are those who believe it belongs in the muck and mud of a construction site.

Where a Gator utility vehicle can go is practically anywhere. Thanks to high

flotation tyres, both the Gator 6x4 and 4x2 are equally at home in off-road and on-turf settings. With lower-than-low ground pressure, the Gators can get out of muddy situations. This also means they'll barely bend blades of grass.

Both Gators feature a low centre of gravity for better stability, plus hefty payload and towing capacities. Wet disc brakes and rack-and-pinion steering contribute to

their smooth and low-effort operation.

For more on the most versatile utility vehicle made today, see your local John Deere dealer.



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Experts join forces to improve standards

Six leading consultant agronomists have joined forces to form a new materials testing laboratory for the golf industry.

The laboratory known as European Turfgrass Laboratories Ltd (ETL Ltd) will be accredited by the USGA Green Section and run to the highest standards to give rapid results for construction work not only in the UK but throughout the world.

The six consultants – pictured from left, Eddie Connaughton, Mike Harbridge, John Hacker, John Souter, George Shiels and Jack McMillan – are well known



throughout the UK and Europe for their high standardised based on both scientific training and practical experience.

Their individual companies McMillan Shiels, Grass Technology International and Professional Sportsturf Design (NW) Ltd continue as independent companies but now have access to a rationalised laboratory ser-

vice.

It will be staffed with qualified and experienced technicians and a laboratory manager responsible for liaison, co-ordination and quality control.

The new laboratory opened for business on February 1 and details of specific services and charges can be obtained by calling 01786 449195.

FLYING DIVOTS



■ John Bradley has been promoted to Sales Manager by Barenbrug UK having previously been working as

Area Manager for the company.

His new role involves supporting distributors as well as consolidating and developing the sales team with the end result of increasing the usage of Barenbrug varieties and mixtures in the UK.

■ Rhône-Poulenc Amenity is the new name for Rhône-Poulenc's golf, sports turf and industrial weed control pesticide business.

"We think it is important for our customers that we have a title that reflects which business we are in," said Austin Davies, the Rhône-Poulenc Amenity Business Manager.

■ David Rycroft, who is currently a Senior Lecturer within the Institute of Irrigation Studies at Southampton University, is to join Professional Sportsturf Design (NW) Ltd.

■ The telephone number within the Sovereign Turf advert on page 57 of the January magazine should have been 01603 664209.

Deere's new range at Belfry

The Belfry – world-famous venue of the 1985, '89 and '93 Ryder Cup matches, and headquarters of the PGA – has invested in nine new John Deere machines worth over £100,000, to assist in course preparation and maintenance throughout the complex.

The purchase comes during an £8 million development programme by De Vere Hotels at The Belfry which includes the new PGA National Training Academy opening this month and a third 18-hole golf course, the PGA National Course, is due to open in spring 1997, alongside the Championship Brabazon and the Derby Course.

Dr Wolfgang Kumpf, lawn & grounds care equipment director for Britain & Europe, flew from the company's European Office in Germany formally to hand over

the new machines to Derek Ganning BEM, Course Manager, and his team of three Head Greenkeepers.

The Belfry's new range has been supplied by local John Deere grounds care dealer GME Ltd, part of the Mitchells Group of companies, and includes: a 3235 lightweight fairways mower; two 2243D diesel greens-mowers; two Gator 6 x 4 utility vehicles; two 2653 utility tees mowers; a 955 33hp compact tractor; a 1200A bunker rake.

"The John Deere machines fitted the bill," he says. "All the equipment we use at The Belfry has to win the approval of all 32 greens staff; following the latest tender John Deere was their top choice for ease of operation and adjustment, quality of cut and serviceability."

Training centre opens

Staff from machinery dealers and customers throughout Britain and Europe are beating a path to Ransomes' superb new International Training Centre at Ipswich.

The building is fully equipped to provide training and instruction in the operation, care and maintenance of all Ransomes, Cushman and Ryan turf equipment. In addition to engineer and

operator training, the building is used also for product familiarisation courses for Ransomes and its dealers' sales staff.

"We are proud of our new centre," said Mike Prentice, the company's technical training officer. "First-class training facilities are an essential part of the total support we provide for our machinery dealers, owners and users."

HAYTER CHALLENGE

Welcome from across the globe

To the names Ryder, Walker, Curtis, Solheim and Dunhill you can now add Hayter if the enthusiastic welcome given to the new Hayter International Cup from all corners of the globe is any gauge.

The Hayter International Cup, which runs alongside the Hayter National Final this year, has already been warmly received by virtually all the invited nations and a successful inaugural event, at West Lancashire Golf Club, this September is all but guaranteed. The Americas team comprising representatives from USA, Canada and Argentina is already complete while the Rest of the World team is all but confirmed.

The Hayter International Cup will be played every two years, alternating between the United Kingdom and the USA, with the four home nation representatives being selected from their performances in the scratch to 12 handicap category in the Hayter Challenge Final the previous year.

The road to the Hayter Challenge Final at Fairhaven GC in September has now been laid with sectional events and the regional finals in place.

Those who survive the first hurdle can look forward to the Regional finals at the following venues: Scotland, Royal Aberdeen May 29; South East, Benton Hall, June 6; South West and South Wales, Salisbury and South Wilts, June 12; Northern, Abergele & Penarn, July 3 and Midland, Peterborough Milton, July 16. As ever some fine golf courses and excellent days, even if you don't quite make it through to the final, to look forward to.

● **Kim Macfie gave more details of the Hayter International Cup at the Hayter Dinner during BTME 96 where he also presented Hayter's annual Outstanding Award for Dealers to Gibson Machinery Sales of Kirkham.**

FROM BLIZZARDS

From blizzards to broken legs... and a lot of fun in between. Outgoing Chairman Barry Heaney remembers his year in office

It is convention to urge those about to tackle a new task to 'break a leg' by way of wishing them luck. BIGGA's outgoing Chairman Barry Heaney waited until the end of his year in office before taking the statement literally.

"I was walking down the driveway outside the house on New Year's Day when I slipped on the ice and crashed. I've broken my leg just above my ankle and have also fractured my shoulder," explained Barry as he recuperated in his home the week before BTME.

The pain in his leg was eased by the memories he has collected in a year in which he has clocked up the miles both home and abroad, dined in the Savoy and met one of golf's true legends.

January

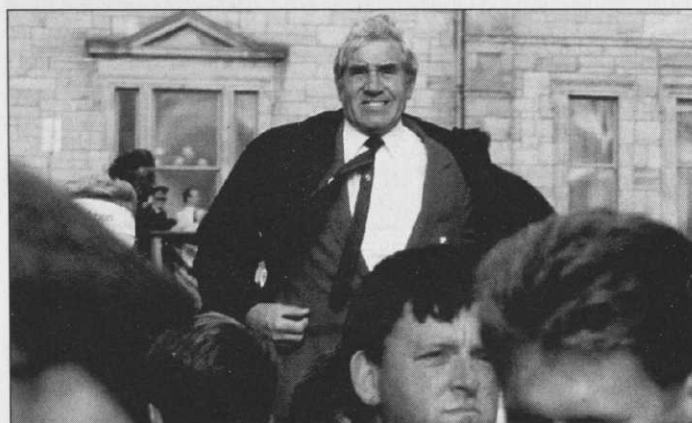
The day I took over as Chairman is one everybody will remember. It started snowing about half past three in the afternoon and by half past four Harrogate was at a standstill. My wife, Joan, left for Harrogate in plenty of time but ended in my hotel room at quarter past eight at night having walked the last mile to the hotel. She was absolutely shattered and furious at having missed me being presented with my Chairman's Jacket.

Harrogate was like a disaster area that night. People were stranded but it was super because everyone pulled together and were helping each other out. Beds were shared, rooms were shared and the hotels were absolutely brilliant bending over backwards, lending out blankets for people.

February

We went to the GCSAA Show in San Francisco. I sat on the International Forum which involved 26 representatives from different countries, representing BIGGA along with Neil Thomas. It was a full three hour session discussing the problems with environment conservation throughout world and the way in which different countries handled it.

San Francisco was breathtaking



On top of the world... well, almost: Barry gets a better view at The Open

and Joan and I enjoyed it tremendously. Debbie Moore, of Agrowe, also took me to Half Moon Bay and Lake Merced courses which were beautiful. When the show was over we went down the Monterey Peninsula and it was very interesting. I am friendly with Charlie Tadge, a Past President of the GCSAA, and his wife Carolyn and he arranged golf course visits for me while Joan had sight seeing trips. It was a marvellous holiday. I travelled down the famous 17 mile drive and had the pleasure of visiting Pebble Beach, Spyglass, Cypress Point, Spanish Bay and several other magnificent courses. It was interesting to see how the other half lives. I played a few holes at Pebble Beach and a full round at Cyprus Point.

It was an experience I'll never forget. On the course there were eight golfers and I counted 16 greenkeepers – and that was the winter team. I watched them hollow coring the greens and top dressing with sand and every bit was worked in by hand by eight men in a line. I've never seen that before.

March

After the excitement of the first two months this was the quiet month for me.

April

Things started to liven up. We interviewed for a new Editor and there was no doubt about the fact that in Scott MacCallum we got a professional Editor who knows something about the game of golf – both sides of it. I've also spoken to greenkeepers in every part of the country about the magazine and they've said how nice it is to have an Editor who wants to talk

and listen to them.

My first visit of the year was to the Central Section in Scotland and the Hayter Qualifier at Aberdeen and Joan and I were invited by Past-Chairman John Crawford. The course for the time of the year was excellent and the weather was wonderful. John does a wonderful job in Scotland and, having just taken on a new job at Stirling, I don't know how he finds the time.

At the end of the month I was invited to a seminar and luncheon by the Agricultural Engineering Association at the Savoy Hotel which was extremely special. I met a lot of old friends there.

Later that day travelled down to Bristol for Westurf. After a mix-up British Rail up-graded me to First Class for the trip down. All that high living!

It was nice to meet up with Gordon and Marion Child who work so hard for the Association as well as past Chairman Ivor Scoones.

I also attended the Golf Course Architects seminar and dinner at Wentworth and grabbed a chance to talk with Chris Kennedy who was preparing for the Volvo PGA Championship.

May

I was invited to the dinner for Peter Hayes retiral as Chief Executive of the STRI. It was nice to see him and wish him well. He has always been a friend to the Association and was the Chairman again this year of the Education Conference at Harrogate.

June

Back down in the smoke for the South East Hayter Qualifier at

Stockley Park. Another very enjoyable day and it gave me an opportunity to meet a lot of lads whom I hadn't met before but a lot of old friends as well. It also allowed me to meet Geoff Hills, our first employed part time Regional Administrator. How refreshing it was to meet such a gentlemen whom you would have thought had been in the job for years. It was a huge blow to the Association when Geoff died so suddenly just after BTME in January and our thoughts go out to his family.

Before too long I was back down south again this time for Southurf. How Geoff Hills managed to handle Southurf after so little time in the job I'll never know but he had definitely done a first class job.

July

At the Northern Hayter Qualifier at Middlesbrough. It was a nice duty to make a presentation to another Past Chairman George Malcolm and thank him for all the work he has done for the Association at all levels.

Then to Erewash Valley for the Midland Region Hayter Qualifier and, this time the chance to play with Kim Macfie. I remember I produced a Barnes Wallis bouncing bomb tee shot off the 1st off the middle of the pond and finished about 100 yards up the fairway. I then won the match by holing a bunker shot on the 16th.

From there to The Open at the Home of Golf, St Andrews. One of the highlights was being invited to the Association of Golf Writers Dinner with Kim Macfie, Bill Lynch and Scott MacCallum. It was extremely enjoyable and I'll remember it for the rest of my life.

On the Wednesday came the highlight for any golfer or greenkeeper – the privilege to make a presentation to Arnold Palmer in front of the clubhouse at St Andrews. I'll treasure the memory for the rest of my life and I feel it was appreciated by Arnold Palmer who made everyone so comfortable.

After The Open it was on to the National Championship at St Annes Old Links. It was dry sunny and very warm all week. It's always a pleasure to meet so many old friends. Unfortunately I picked up a bit of food poisoning and was quite ill for a time.

TO BROKEN LEGS...

August

This was a quiet month. I only had one function in August and that was Northern Section Golf Day at Harrogate. It was nice to be invited and meet up with lads from my own Region.

September

The Saltex Show at Windsor. It was very rewarding. We all worked very hard and it gave me the opportunity to meet Janet Adamson for the first time. I can only say that we are very lucky to have such a Membership Services Officer with so much talent at her fingertips.

On to the Walker Cup at Royal Porthcawl. What an experience! Rain, Pythium, Fusarium, Take All? This argument is still raging but what a wonderful weekend. How refreshing to see our amateurs performing on the same or a higher level than the Americans and to come away with victory was tremendous. The weather had left David Ward, the Course Manger, with major problems but he still produced an excellent golf course. Putting surfaces may not have looked the best but they certainly played well and were appreciated by both sets of players. I also met the Secretary of Royal Porthcawl who was only too pleased for the support of the BIGGA back-up team and praised the Association highly.

West Lincs and the Hayter Final. We had representatives from all five regions as well as the boys from Ireland. What a bunch of lads they were. I don't think I've ever seen Elliott Small as happy as he was when he collected the team prize for Scotland.

Kim Macfie dropped me as a partner but he lived to regret it - I took him to the cleaners!



Presenting the BIGGA trophy for achievement to Arnold Palmer



The Toro/PGA European Tour Student Greenkeeper of the Year presentation

In late September Joan, Neil and myself were invited to the Swedish Conference and Exhibition in Jonkoping and were invited to join an Open Forum with greenkeepers from all the countries of Scandinavia as well as America. What came through very strongly was that they want to take a lead from BIGGA and want to work closely with us. The Swedes are our best friends anyway and Neil has a very good relationship with them.

We were met by Per Olofdjung, President of the SGA and taken to his golf course and that was extremely interesting. He took us to see his sheds and the greenkeeping staff's accommodation was superb. It would do a lot of golf club secretaries and managers good to take a look at the way things are done in Sweden. They look after their staff extremely well and even have a cleaner who comes in once a week to clean out the staff accommodation.

Tommy Lindelof, Chief Executive of the SGA and his wife Helen, picked us on and took us on a sight seeing tour of Stockholm and to have such a guided tour was unbelievable. A visit which Joan and I will treasure forever.

October

We had the Toro Student of the Year Award. Dean Cleaver and Ken Richardson as Education Chairman and Education Officer, do a power of work on this award. It is not an easy task to find a winner such is the quality of candidate today.

I was delighted to be on hand to present the trophy to James Braithwaite who was a very wor-

thy winner.

The Kubota Challenge at The Belfry. Oh dear. This is one which I'd rather forget. I don't think BIGGA came out of it with any flying colours at all. Our lads did their best but it wasn't good enough on the day. It did give me the opportunity on behalf of BIGGA to make a presentation to Brian Hurtle, a great friend to BIGGA, who is retiring. He was the first person to sponsor BIGGA and Kubota are still one of our biggest supporters.

Off to Dublin for the Irish Greenkeepers show where we had a stand. The Irish Greenkeepers Association had just changed their name from Greenkeepers to Golf Course Superintendents and this was worrying to us because we didn't know what would happen to greenkeepers just below Superintendent level. However after a meeting we were given assurances that every class as of greenkeeper would be accepted. This was pleasing and I wished them all the best and offered them any help that BIGGA could give.

November

East Midland's section AGM at Kirby Muxloe and the opportunity to accept a the first cheque for the BIGGA Building Fund. It was very forward thinking of the section and I do hope that other sections will feel able to do the same.

I also was the guest of honour at the Sheffield Union of Golf Clubs Dinner in the Cutlers Hall in Sheffield the Association which was a big thrill for me.

December

The 11th of December was one of

the happiest times of the year for me because we combine our regular Board meeting with our Christmas Dinner and it gives the Board a chance to say thank you to the staff and the Regional Administrators for all the work they have done.

We also made a presentation to Walter Woods, our first Chairman, who has retired from St Andrews. Walter has been a figurehead whom anyone could look up to and say, "Yes that's the chap I'd like to follow and be like." Thank you Walter.

From there over to North Wales Section for their AGM.

I ended the year well but started the new year very badly when on New Year's Day I slipped on my drive and ended up with a "pot" on my leg and a hair line fracture in my shoulder.

■ *It's been a year which I will never forget for the comradeship and friendliness of all greenkeepers everywhere I've been. It was also nice to get to know some of the office staff a little bit better. What I have found that all the staff are so helpful, so friendly, nothing is too much trouble.*

It would be remiss of me not to thank the review body for all the time and work they have put in to bringing this document to final conclusion.

As for 1996 I do think that Dean Cleaver will provide the continuity that is needed for the Association to continue its progress but he has got a more difficult year than I had. The Association has move forward so quickly since 1987 but we now have the address the situation of the office accommodation which is becoming an increasing problem.

The Chairman's job is becoming more time consuming because greenkeepers don't just want to see their Chairman in the magazine, they want to see him at functions on their patch.

I am indebted to Wortley Golf Club for agreeing that I could have all the time I wanted to fulfil my duties and that allowed me to do the year justice. I was determined that I would visit every region and I have been to functions in every region.

Last, but not least, I'd like to thank Joan for all her support throughout the year. She has accompanied me whenever she has been able and organised me so well that I was able to enjoy the year!

LETTERS

Many thanks 1

May I take this opportunity of thanking everyone concerned with the running and general organisation of the Miracle Professional Premier Greenkeeper Award, in particular Pat Murphy and Richard Minton who I know devoted a great deal of time and effort throughout the year. I am sure I speak for the other finalists in saying how much we enjoyed our time at Aldwark where the hospitality we received was second to none.

It was also my first opportunity to visit the BIGGA premises adjacent to the hotel. I, for one, expected the offices to be sited within the hotel itself which is not the case. I can now fully appreciate and understand the need to acquire alternative, more spacious, and more suitable office accommodation.

Finally may I wish everyone at BIGGA a very happy and prosperous new year.

Mike Goodhind

Miracle Professional Greenkeeper of the Year Tytherington Golf Club

Many thanks 2

I would like to send my thanks to BIGGA and the Hambro Legal Helpline. My appreciation goes to both for the help and support they offered throughout my Industrial Tribunal.

I was delighted that I was successful in the tribunal and that the outcome was that I was unfairly and constructively dismissed from my previous job at a golf club in Bristol.

I am now seeking another job on a golf course in the Bristol area and, having won my case, as sure I will not be prejudiced against.

Mark Powell, Bristol

Many thanks 3

Just to let you know that I got a job through placing an advert in the November issue through The Job Club and to thank Greenkeeper International for its help.

It was a good Christmas present to have and I start the job in March at Willow Valley Golf and Country Club.

Andrew Smith

Brighouse, West Yorks

Service now puts legal eagles to work for you

■ Up until now members have been able to receive legal advice for any problem with regard to employment situations but they couldn't receive any legal representation until after they had been dismissed.

Now, in a major new advance for Membership Services, they will be eligible for representation at all levels of employment dispute including representation at disciplinary hearings.

"My information from Hambro's is that this is very much an innovative service and I'm sure that members will come to regard it as a very substantial benefit of membership of the Association," explained Executive

Director Neil Thomas.

"I'm delighted that BIGGA is able to offer this new service for our members and it should further safeguard their employment rights."

"Talking of membership benefits I would remind all members with renewal dates of December 31, 1995 and January 31, 1996, who have not already sent renewal forms and payments that they should do so immediately if they wish to receive the benefits of this new service and their March Greenkeeper International and subsequent issues," added Neil.

The new service is available from April 1 for an initial six months trial period when it will then be reviewed.

As from April 1 1996, BIGGA is pleased to announce that an arrangement has been made with Kirbys Solicitors which complements the current 24 hour Legal Helpline and Legal Expenses Insurance offered by Hambro Legal Protection by offering all United Kingdom members the opportunity, where practicable, to be represented at any disciplinary hearing brought by their employers.

David Burton, of Kirbys, Solicitors of Harrogate, has, for many years, advised BIGGA in respect of employment matters. He has 18 years experience of working in the employment field and regularly sits in Industrial Tribunals as a part-time Chairman to adjudicate on employment disputes.

He is assisted by Tim Tyndall who has previously worked with an employment unit of a major city legal firm and has extensive experience of presenting Industrial Tribunal cases throughout the country.

Members have derived considerable assistance from the legal advice received from the Helpline and have, where necessary, achieved a high level of success when represented before Industrial Tribunals supported by Hambro. Our new arrangement will provide expert support when appearing at an internal disciplinary hearing.

We know that some employers will still dismiss their employees without affording that employee the opportunity to deal with the complaint that has been made against him. Good industrial practice however dictates that before anybody loses their job either by reason of alleged misconduct, redundancy or illness that

employee should be given the right to know why it is that his job is being threatened, he should have the right to have his say and to demand that his explanations are at least given proper consideration by his employer.

It is now hoped that members will be assisted by skilled representation at such interviews.

If members contact the Helpline and report that they have been summoned to attend a disciplinary interview, Hambro will provide advice and a contact telephone number to arrange representation. Kirbys will then, if at all possible, arrange for either David Burton or Tim Tyndall to meet with the member, prior to the meeting, and thereafter to represent him at that meeting.

It has to be recognised that there can be no certainty that representation can, in fact, be made available. If Kirbys are not given enough notice (three days would normally suffice) there may be practical difficulties in arranging for a solicitor to attend. In that event, however, strenuous efforts would be made on our behalf to negotiate a postponement of such a meeting to a mutually convenient date. An employer who refused such a request may well be considered by an Industrial Tribunal to be behaving unfairly.

It also has to be understood that there is no absolute right to legal representation before such hearings. Employers will sometimes argue that disciplinary hearings are not appropriate for lawyers to attend. The ACAS Code of Practice, however, makes it clear that employers should allow employees to be accompanied by a

Trade Union representative or by a fellow employee of their choice. Many of our members will not have Trade Union representation available and may consider it inappropriate to be accompanied by such other members of staff as may exist, particularly if those members of staff are in a subordinate position. In those circumstances, legal representation may be a reasonable option available and if such representation were to be denied by your employer and if you were subsequently dismissed the prospects of persuading an industrial tribunal that there had been a material procedure unfairness would again be fairly high.

If you are refused representation by your employer you may still receive advice and support from the Legal Helpline on the conduct of your disciplinary hearing.

The clear intention of course of such representation is to try to ensure that members do not lose their job or have any other penalty unfairly imposed upon them. It is hoped that in many situations the presence of a legal representative will serve to make employers realise the seriousness of pursuing disciplinary proceedings and to ensure that such proceedings are properly and fairly conducted.

In the event that the outcome of such a meeting is unfavourable to the member, advice will then immediately be available as to whether or not an internal appeal should be pursued (if available) or whether, in the unhappy event that a dismissal has occurred, an application to an industrial tribunal should then be pursued. At this point, a Hambro claim form for legal expenses insurance cover will be made available to enable you to pursue your claim.

This service is free of charge to all members. As far as we know this is a facility which is unique to BIGGA members and it is not known how much demand there will be for the service. Accordingly, the arrangement is being launched on a six month trial basis. If it is clear that this service is of value to members, arrangements will then be put in hand to extend the service, hopefully, to become a permanent feature of the many benefits of BIGGA membership.

■ Next month, David Burton will explain when a dismissal may be unfair and how Industrial Tribunal proceedings are conducted.