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GREENKEEPER

International

JANUARY 1996

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Mike Goodhind, winner of the Miracle Greenkeeper of the Year award

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International

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Golf Greenkeepers Association

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The journey

Early in 1994 we embarked on a journey which was to take us through the whole ambit of BIGGA's structure and activities at national, regional and section level by means of a review which has resulted in the completed "Towards 2000" document. This journey will end in Harrogate at our forthcoming AGM when members will be asked to approve the document and most importantly implement the resulting amendments proposed to the Constitution and Rules of the Association.

Looking back, the exercise over the past two years has seen the democratic processes of the Association at their best. All members with an interest in commenting on the review should have had the opportunity to do so through their sections. At regional level there has been a proper and considered consultation on the proposed changes and representations made to the Board of Management for consideration. Over and above this a Review Body was established which in addition to the Headquarters Management Team, included our Chairman and representatives from each of the regions. This Review Body was instrumental in progressing the "Towards 2000" document and I would like to thank those member representatives who gave freely of their time - Barry Heaney, Gordon Child, Ian Holoran, Harry Diamond, Clive Osgood and Richard Barker.

So we come to the AGM with the review document having broad based support from the sections of the Association and the five regional boards. The focus is now on the proposed amendments to the Constitution and Rules and space will not allow me to comment in detail in the course of this article. I will, however, make mention of two key aspects of the changes. One relates to membership of the Association and seeks to give a clearer definition of the entitlement to full membership of BIGGA. This, in future, if accepted, will be limited to "any person employed in the keeping of the green at a golfing establishment" together with Life Members duly elected by the Association in General Meeting. Other membership categories will continue with the introduction also of a "Student Member" category. Existing members who feel they may no longer meet the criteria for full member-



BIGGA in focus

BY NEIL THOMAS

ship have no need for concern as a separate clause allows for those persons in paid up membership of the Association at the time of implementation of the revised Constitution by the membership in General Meeting and who do not meet the new criteria for membership as laid down in that Constitution to continue in membership at the discretion of the appropriate section committee.

A second key aspect of the changes relates to the Board of Management which, on acceptance of the proposals, will henceforth comprise of five members being one member from each region, together with a Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Past Chairman. An important change is that the Chairman and Vice-Chairman can be appointed by the Board from within the full membership of the Association. Should the Board appoint from within the five regional members then the region in question shall be entitled to elect an additional representative. So the Board of Management will be restricted to eight members. The introduction of a clause allowing the Board to appoint a Chairman and Vice-Chairman from within the full membership rather than restricting those appointments to members of the board as currently applies is important. It will allow a much greater degree of flexibility and should ensure that those taking on the positions in future can give freely of their time and commit themselves wholly to positions where the demands are ever-increasing.

I hope I have given you just a brief insight to the changes being proposed and that members attending the AGM will see fit to vote in these amendments to our Constitution and Rules. Looking

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ends

towards 2000 and beyond, I believe that they will increase the standing and effectiveness of the Association as we look to meet the many challenges that lie ahead.

A welcome for new Golden and Silver Key members

BIGGA'S Education and Development Fund was established in January 1992 and is now entering its fifth year. Its achievements are well documented and it has been particularly successful on two fronts. First in providing education and training opportunities for our members which otherwise would not have been possible and secondly in bringing together, through a common programme, those companies within the industry who wish to support greenkeepers in their quest to enhance their knowledge and learning opportunities and to take forward the status of the profession. 1995 saw the publication of "A Practical Guide to the Ecological Management of the Golf Course" as well as a new training video on "Golf Course Preparation". Both were made possible through the resources of the Fund as were the Regional Management Training Courses which will continue across the country and in Southern Ireland during the coming spring. A number of projects for 1996 are being planned and during the BTME in Harrogate we will be launching another new video on the 'Reconstruction of a Green'. The Fund has therefore become a keystone of our progress as an Association and within this magazine we recognise and thank those companies as Golden and Silver Key Members who will be supporting the Fund in 1996. A mention also for those individuals who choose to support the Fund and become Golden or Silver Key members of the Association. This is a very real commitment to the education and training of greenkeepers and I thank them for their support.

A special welcome for our new Golden Key company members - Hepworth Minerals and Chemicals Ltd, Pattison, Mommersteeg, Levington, Superturf and Ocmis. A welcome too for Rolawn as a Silver Key member. I feel sure that their decisions to support the Fund will be fully justified and I look forward to their playing a full part in the consultative processes through which the Fund and the projects emanating from it have prospered.

NEWS

End of an era

At the end of a year in which he prepared his fourth Open Championship course Walter Woods, Links Superintendent at St Andrews, begins his well earned retirement - although the pipe, slippers and SAGA holiday brochures may have to wait a while before they are put to good use because he has no intention of saying farewell to the profession he loves.

Walter will remain as a consultant to St Andrews Links and will expand his consultancy work to share his vast experience with others.

"I go into clubs where the greenkeeper is suffering stress and without the resources to do the job properly and try to provide him with support. I find that the committee listens to me and I can usually improve the situation for the greenkeeper within a couple of months," he explained. As the first Chairman of BIGGA in 1987 Walter has seen the Association grow and been a major influence in what it has done for the profession.

"I see a different type of greenkeeper coming through. One who has a responsible job, is in charge of budgeting and who has a more managerial role. The Association is largely responsible for this and is keen to promote the job of the greenkeeper and point the way



Fond farewell: Barry Heaney, left, presents Walter Woods with a retirement gift from BIGGA

forward for the profession."

He also gave credit to the Association for improving the image of the greenkeeper.

"It used to be that greenkeepers wore overalls and a 'bunnet' but now you see young men who still wear overalls while out on the course but who dress in their BIGGA blazer, collar and tie when they have meetings. That has done a lot for the image of greenkeeping and the Association has been responsible for that."

One thing which does annoy him, however, is the Association's current membership level.

"We have moved up from

1,000 members when we first started to 6,000 now but we should have 12,000 members.

"Every greenkeeper should be a member of BIGGA and it is down to the clubs to learn that the course won't succeed without a good greenkeeper and that a good greenkeeper should be a member of the Association to tap into all the expertise and educational opportunities it has to offer."

If there is one thing which has surprised and delighted Walter since the birth of BIGGA it is the education which is now on offer.

"I didn't think it would ever happen that many greenkeepers would be better educated than the secretaries but it has because the Association not only educates on greenkeeping matters but offers courses in management as well."

After 21 years at St Andrews Walter will miss preparing the courses for Championships.

"Not just the Opens but the other professional events and the top amateur championships. I got a real buzz out of that," he recalls.

Walter was invited to the Board's Christmas Dinner just before Christmas and presented with a token of appreciation from all in the Association by current BIGGA Chairman Barry Heaney.

Going Dutch...




A party of greenkeepers and Course Managers visited the Barenbrug Headquarters and Research and Testing Establishment in Holland. The trip was organised by Barenbrug, Europe's largest grass breeder and producer of amenity grasses and Jamie Bennett of Grass Roots, and the party predominately comprising greenkeepers from the Home Counties, toured the company's Headquarters in the morning and was given a talk on the work that was being carried out done. After lunch they travelled to see some of the research work in progress and the extensive testing grounds.

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Out to grass...

The revelation that it takes 15 years to develop a new variety of grass was just one of the interesting pieces of information revealed at the South West and South Wales Region Seminar at Cannington College in Bridgewater, Somerset.

Sponsored by Barenbrug the day was introduced by John Bradley, Area Manager of Barenbrug UK Ltd who reminded the delegates of a passage from Jonathan Swift's Gulliver's Travels.

"And he gave it for his opinion that whoever could make two ears of corn or two blades of grass to grow upon a spot of ground where only one grew before, would deserve better of mankind and do more essential service to his country than the whole race of politicians put together."

The talks began with "Perennial rye grass for the golf green in the year 2005" by Gerard van t'Klooster, Head of Breeding in Holland who explained the work behind developing new varieties

and getting them to a state where they are ready to be marketed.. He was followed by John Linneker, Manager of Royal North Devon GC who spoke on "Golf Club Management". His advice to managers was "not to punish every mistake that people make".

'Treat wildlife like novice swimmers...'

Cannington College HND student John Wilson took the day up to coffee with his talk on "Work experience on an American golf course" from his time at Sahali Golf and Country Club near Seattle. He gave golf clubs something to think about with the fact that the club spent £10,000 per annum on employee meals.

After coffee Mike Canaway, Chief Executive of the STRI spoke on "Research today for the needs of tomorrow" and gave an insight as to the work currently been undertaken at Bingley. He was followed by Mark Anderson, a student of Sparsholt College and Head Greenkeeper at Newbury Golf Club on "A golf course

within a racecourse" who talked of the problems he had encountered which included concrete creeping its way to the surface of the course making vertidrainage impossible.

After lunch Dr Anne-Maria Brennan, ecologist for the EGU talked on "On course conservation, golf and nature in partnership" and gave a tip on the building of ponds. "Treat wildlife like novice swimmers and give them a shallow end and no steep banks."

George Shiels closed the seminar with his talk on "The presentation of a golf course form an agronomist's point of view". Using a car analogy his advice was always to make the best of the courses qualities and not to try and make it something else. "An Audi tries to be the best Audi it can be and not a Roller or a Porsche."

The day was rounded up by South West and South Wales Regional Administrator Gordon Child, who, along with wife Marion, had organised the day.

Keeping the course open for 52 weeks of the year

"If golfers want to play all-year-round they must accept that vital preventative maintenance has to be carried out in the summer months and must accept the disruption that goes with it", so says Martyn Jones, Head of the Turf Section at Myerscough College.

"Fusarium can be largely prevented by summer treatments; aeration is most effective when carried out in the summer when the grass plants are most in need of oxygen and overseeding is most successful in the late summer when good germination is guaranteed and Poa annua less likely to thrive".

Martyn Jones was speaking at an evening Greenkeeping Seminar and Supper at Mere Golf and Country Club.

Mike Sheehan, Course Manager, explained that at Mere they now have an established policy to hollow core and top dress at the beginning of August. Disruption at this time of year is minimal and usually within two weeks all evidence of the treatments have disappeared. Competitions are arranged round this programme and generally a large percentage of the golfers are on holiday then anyway. Delegates from Davyhulme Golf Club and Prestbury

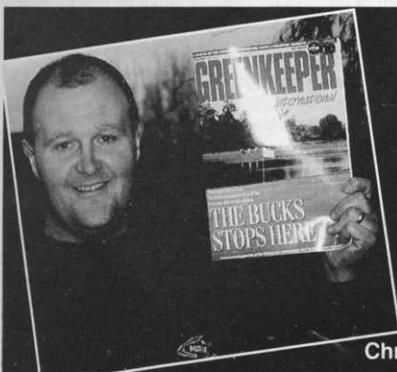
confirmed that they too regularly hollow core in August with excellent results.

Dennis Mortram from Reaseheath College spoke on aeration and he too advocates summer treatments to prevent problems in winter rather than waiting until the course is waterlogged. He reminded the delegates that they don't manage the grass - they manage the soil. And if that soil is compacted or waterlogged then vital oxygen is restricted and the grass will not thrive. He also made a plea for more research into the whole subject of aeration.

A lively Question & Answer session covered topics ranging from the benefits of sand based greens, to the optimum number of competitions for an average course; overseeding; compaction and the difference between a Head Greenkeeper and a Course Manager.

90 delegates attended from 44 North West clubs, nearly half of whom were Chairmen of Green or Committee members.

The evening was organised by SISIS Equipment and jointly sponsored by SISIS and Rhône Poulenc.



Membership milestone

Richard Martin, a 33 year old assistant from Ripon Golf Club is BIGGA's 6000th member and as such has had his membership cheque returned. "I'm delighted, it's a great Christmas present," he said.

HAYTER CHALLENGE

Hayter broaden their horizons

Scotland may be still basking in the glory of their victory at West Lancs last September but preparations for the 1996 Hayter Challenge are already well under way.

Such has been the success of the competition since Hayter's took it over from Iseki in 1993 under the guidance of Sales and Marketing Director Kim Macfie that plans have been announced to expand the event to take in the rest of the world.

It comes in the shape of the Hayter International Cup which will run alongside the Hayter Challenge final next year with the match alternating between Britain and the USA on a two year cycle after that - similar to the Ryder Cup, an event destined to play second fiddle to the Hayter International Cup once it becomes established.

The match, which next year will take place at West Lancashire Golf Club on Monday September 16, will pit the Rest of the World, in the shape of greenkeepers from the four home nations, Spain, Germany, Sweden and Australia against the Americas comprising six Americans, four Canadians and two Argentinians.

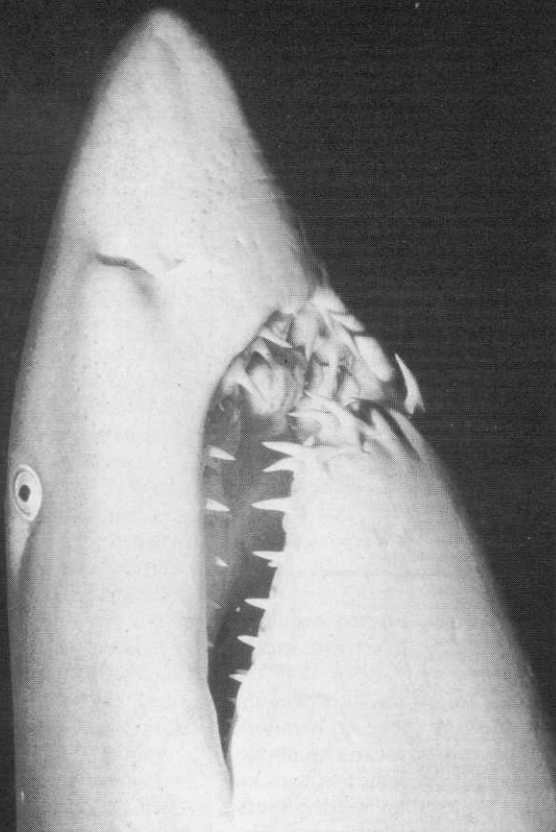
The format will be six four-balls in the morning and 12 singles matches in the afternoon. The competitors will then join the Hayter Challenge finalists on the Tuesday and Wednesday at Fairhaven Golf Club.

The British representatives will be selected from the leading nett scorers in the handicap bracket scr-12 residing in each of the home nations at last year's Hayter Challenge final.

"I see the Hayter International Cup as an ideal opportunity for greenkeepers from all over the world to meet, mix and share each others experiences as well as enjoy a friendly but competitive golf match," said Kim Macfie.

"I hope that like the Hayter Challenge it grows to become an important event on greenkeepers' calendars."

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Greens MOWERS

IN THE
SPOTLIGHT

Hugh Tilley canvasses opinion on a selection of Greens Mowers currently on the market

Greens mowers are always the first machine anyone thinks of when considering golf course machinery. Perhaps they are the glamour machines because they are in such frequent use, or maybe it because they have the most important visual impact on the course.

Most greenkeepers prefer to use pedestrian operated machines, however, many admit that ride-on greens triples offer time and labour savings and have to be used to greater or lesser extent on most courses. Whether there is any significant difference between quality of cut is debatable, perhaps the greatest difference is visual – the width of those highly desirable stripes.

Groomers, conditioners or rakes are available for most if not all greens machines, and most greenkeepers either love or hate them. Most groomers only work in a straight line – which may be a problem for the perimeter cut, few people are prepared to lift them just for one or two circles of the green. Verti-cutter reels are also an option for many machines, however as these require the cutting unit to be changed most greenkeepers prefer to have a dedicated machine for the task although changing



Philip Bowes aboard Peterstone Golf Club's Hayter Beaver T93

reels may be very quick and easy. The Dennis cassette system is the ultimate in quick change, and perhaps this could be adopted on other machines.

Without doubt quality of cut is the number one criteria in selecting machines with cuts per metre (or yard) the salient figure to consider however the greenkeepers spoken to accepted that a machine sold as a "greens mower" would provide acceptable cut quality. After this other considerations have to be price,

reliability, service back-up and ease of use, including of adjusting. Again most greenkeepers took it for granted that the main contenders in this field would be easy to use and reliable. Service back-up was more important in this survey than in any of the previous ones, probably because the greens mower is the mainstay of maintenance – and appearance, not to mention green speed.

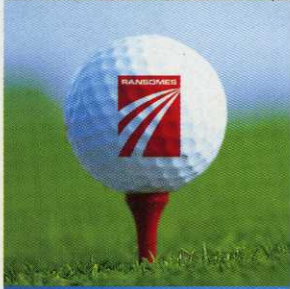
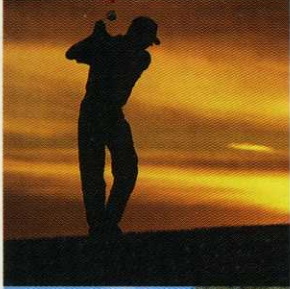
Greens vary considerably between clubs, and often between different parts on the

same course. The size of the greens, their level and the surrounds have a significant impact on the ease of using a mower on them. Manoeuvrability is more vital on some courses than on others, while some have a greater requirement for machines with better than average stability and surefootedness. Greens triples have no tread or rib on tyres or rollers, and engine braking and/or all wheel drive may be required.

The Hayter Beaver T93 at Peterstone GC, South Wales

A troubled financial history, i.e. lack of money for investment, was the most critical factor in Peterstone's purchase of the Hayter T93. The five year old 18 hole private course is in receivership, however consultants advised of the necessity of maintaining the course, and thus the need to invest. A number of different machines were demonstrated, however the T93 supplied through local dealer Ted Hopkins (who took the old GT as a trade-in) performed perfectly satisfactorily and was available "at a price we couldn't refuse," said Philip Bowes, joint Head Greenkeeper.

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