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■ The next edition of
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should be with you by July 9

GREENKEEPER

International

JUNE 1996

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There she blows: Seacroft, venue for this year's National Tournament
Picture by Scott MacCallum

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GREENKEEPER

International

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Developing the Regional Administrator's role

It is a pleasure this month to welcome Derek Farrington as BIGGA's Part Time Regional Administrator in the South East Region. Derek is recently retired from his role as Manager of the Surrey County Staff Club which is unique in local government and provides recreational, social and conference facilities for staff of Surrey County Council, Royal Borough of Kingston, Kingston University and Kingston College. Prior to this he had been employed as a Principal Management Services Officer. Derek has settled in Worthing in West Sussex and now sees golf taking over from cricket as his main interest. He is currently a member of Coombe Wood Golf Club, Kingston. I wish him well in his



BIGGA in focus

BY NEIL THOMAS

new role and he will soon become a familiar figure to our South East Region members.

In writing of Derek's appointment, it seems an opportune

moment to reflect on the developing role of the Regional Administrator. Back in 1987 when the regional and section structure was established, the appointment of five Regional Administrators was considered essential in order to ensure the efficacy of administration at regional level. Funding was extremely limited and the call went out for volunteers. These were soon forthcoming and in the intervening years, although personnel have changed from time to time, these posts have proved significant in ensuring the smooth running of the Association. As time went by and the Association was set on a substantial growth curve it became ever clearer that the burden of administration was increasing while the development

of the Association indicated the need for a similar development in the Regional Administrator's role. In recent years it has become apparent that the demands on the Regional Administrator are such that it has now become exceedingly difficult for him to balance the needs of his region against his commitment as a full-time employee of a golf club. The South-East Regional Board was the first to recognise the incompatibility of the respective demands on the Regional Administrator and, after due consideration by the Board of Management, the appointment of the first employee Regional Administrator in a part-time capacity was sanctioned in the South-East Region. Geof Hills was appointed in May of 1995 and following his tragic death in Harrogate in January he is now succeeded by Derek Farrington.

The Midland Regional Board has now set off down the same road as the South-East and an appointment in this Region is now imminent. This is an appropriate opportunity therefore to pay tribute to the excellent work undertaken by Roger Willars in the Midland Region. It has been a pleasure to work with Roger and I know from the many comments I have received from members in the region just how much his services have been appreciated over the years. It has been a job well done.

Just how then does the Association envisage the development of the Regional Administrator's role to meet the present day needs of our members? In a gradual, phased movement to "employee" rather than "volunteer" posts, the Board of Management's philosophy has centred very much on the need to establish lines of communication with all golf clubs in the Regions as well as with Course Managers/Head Greenkeepers and their staff. Allied to this is the need at regional level to implement membership drives to increase the Association's membership. The Regional Administrator will have a clearly defined role in promoting the welfare of the individual member who in turn will be encouraged through his/her section to contact the

New Marketing Manager's mission for the Association

BIGGA's new Sales and Marketing Manager is 32 year-old James McEvoy, who joins the Association from GPT Ltd, the telecommunications company where he was Product Launch Manager. Greenkeeper International put some pertinent questions to him:

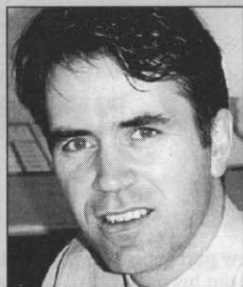
What attracted you to BIGGA?

I saw in BIGGA the opportunity to use the marketing skills and experience I have acquired in the rapidly growing telecommunications industry to good effect in another fast growing industry. Also the fact that I am interested in golf and am a member of a golf club (*James plays off 8*) and seeing things from the other side of the game made me extremely interested in this career move.

What are your initial aims?

BIGGA is a highly respected organisation with a well established membership. My initial aim will be to help support the membership and raise the profile of greenkeepers within the golf industry and beyond.

The Association has many



James McEvoy

other relationships within the industry and I will be aiming to continue and nurture these contacts.

How will you achieve that?

I would like to increase the membership numbers using direct marketing techniques and database information to more accurately target our markets.

Anything else?

I'd like to find out exactly what greenkeepers want from BIGGA. I believe that we are here to provide a service and help to represent greenkeepers. It is important therefore that we work as closely together as we can.

What can you see for us in the future?

To help widen our opportunities and improve our profile we must utilise all that technology can offer. This is as true in marketing as it is in greenkeeping.

The Internet and all that it offers is one area that can be explored. Here we can have pages which our members and the industry can tap into providing pages from *Greenkeeper International* and any other useful information.

Tell us a little about yourself

Well, my career background is that I have worked in telecommunications as both an engineer and then marketer for 16 years.

My main interests are sport and food! I've represented Lancashire Schools at cricket and Liverpool schools at football but now prefer the more genteel sport of golf.

Sadly I'm a keen Evertonian which is a little unfortunate on Merseyside - which makes leaving to move to Yorkshire a little easier to bear.

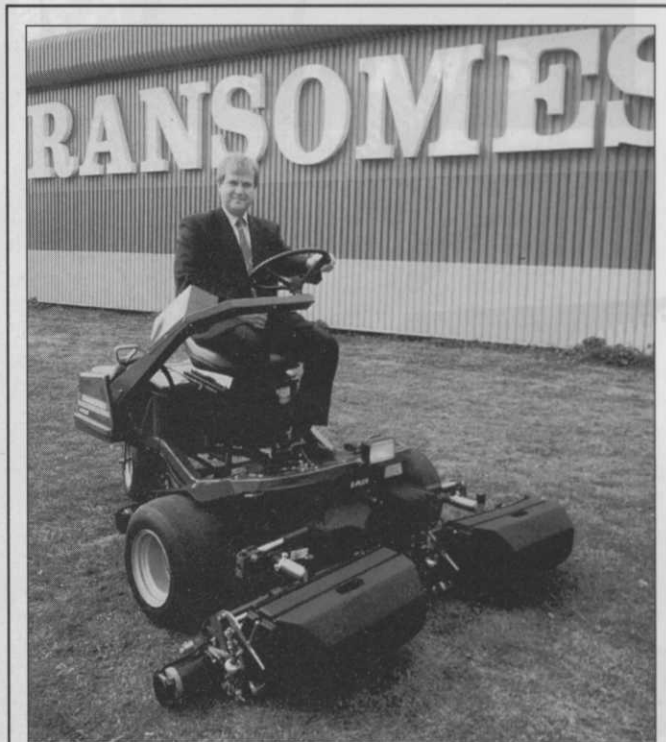


Derek Farrington

Regional Administrator when a need arises. While the Regional Administrator will have an administrative and organisational role to fulfil in his Region, there will be an emphasis on personal contact with the individual member and importantly with the golf club through the Chairman of Green and Secretary. BIGGA's role will become better understood in golf clubs while there should be discernible benefits for greenkeepers' professional development particularly in terms of support from within clubs for educational and training programmes. The Regional Administrator will need time and there will be large geographical areas to be covered but he will have a key role in the further development of both BIGGA and its members interests.

As I have stated, the Board of Management has embarked on a phased programme of implementing "employee" as opposed to "volunteer" Regional Administrator posts. Subject to financial considerations, the Board of Management has set a target date of 1st October 1997 to establish such posts in all five regions but, in a phased programme, the timing of the remaining appointments will be line with the wishes of the individual Regional Boards and the prevailing circumstances in those regions. In conclusion, the work of the Regional Administrators and their contribution to BIGGA, both current and past post holders, since 1987 needs to be recognised. These are members who have given freely of their time to promote the best interests of their Association. In doing so, they have had to balance their Association's demands and their full time roles as golf club employees. It has not been easy and I thank them for their unceasing efforts which have contributed in a substantial way to the strong, professional association which they and their fellow members can enjoy and participate in today and which is well set to meet the challenges of the future.

NEWS



New MD for Ransomes

Jeremy Hockham, pictured, has been appointed Managing Director of Ransomes, Sims and Jefferies Ltd.

Given direct responsibility for managing and developing the people, programmes and business prospects at Ransomes' Ipswich site, Mr Hockham's appointment will enable Ransomes Group Chief Executive, Peter Wilson, to direct closer attention towards other parts of the business, as Ransomes contin-

ues to seek and implement cost and efficiency improvements both in Britain and overseas.

Gaining a First Class Honours Degree in Engineering at Brunel University and an MSc in Robotics and Automated Systems from Imperial College, London, Mr Hockham has appropriate previous experience at British Aerospace and the Chloride Group. Aged 35, he is married with two young daughters.

Greenkeeper moves on

Headland Amenity has appointed former greenkeeper Jim Darling as its northern amenity manager.

Jim, pictured, will service the amenity sector in Scotland, Cumbria and the North East of England providing expert technical advice to greenkeepers and turf managers in the area. He will also service the existing Headland Amenity distributorship within the region.

Formerly a sales representative for Vitax, Jim is a qualified greenkeeper and has been head keeper at a number of well-known courses. His main hobby is golf.



HAYTER CHALLENGE

Undie-cover reporter fails to do his job

News from Headquarters is that Ken Richardson has been sacked from his role of part-time news gatherer at Hayter Section events for failing to inform the Editor of the strip-pergram who "did her stuff" on the 4th green at Sene Valley in Kent. Worse still he didn't even take any pictures.

Anyone wishing to replace Ken and provide such titbits of information at future Hayter events should contact the Editor.



John Moorhouse, John Wells and Jason Hatton, winner of the Mid-Anglia Section qualifier



Robert Washbrook, Robert Phillips and Jason Shepherd with Hendon Club Captain David Taylor at the London Section qualifier

Ian Buckley, the Welsh qualifier to represent BIGGA in the inaugural Hayter International Cup, has featured in a superb press release put out by his club, informing people of Ian's success and wishing him well for the competition.

ISO 9000

In last month's *Greenkeeper International* it was stated that "Toro has been awarded the prestigious ISO 9000 certification for international quality consistency at its US manufacturing plant in Wisconsin. It is the first commercial turfcare equipment manufacturer to receive the designation."

Kim Macfie, Sales and Marketing Director of Hayter would like to point out that in the UK, BS 5750 was the forerunner to ISO 9000 and those accredited with this standard were therefore also accredited with ISO 9000 when this became the recognised international standard. Hayter achieved BS 5750 in January 1993 and, as stated, subsequently became recognised under ISO 9000.

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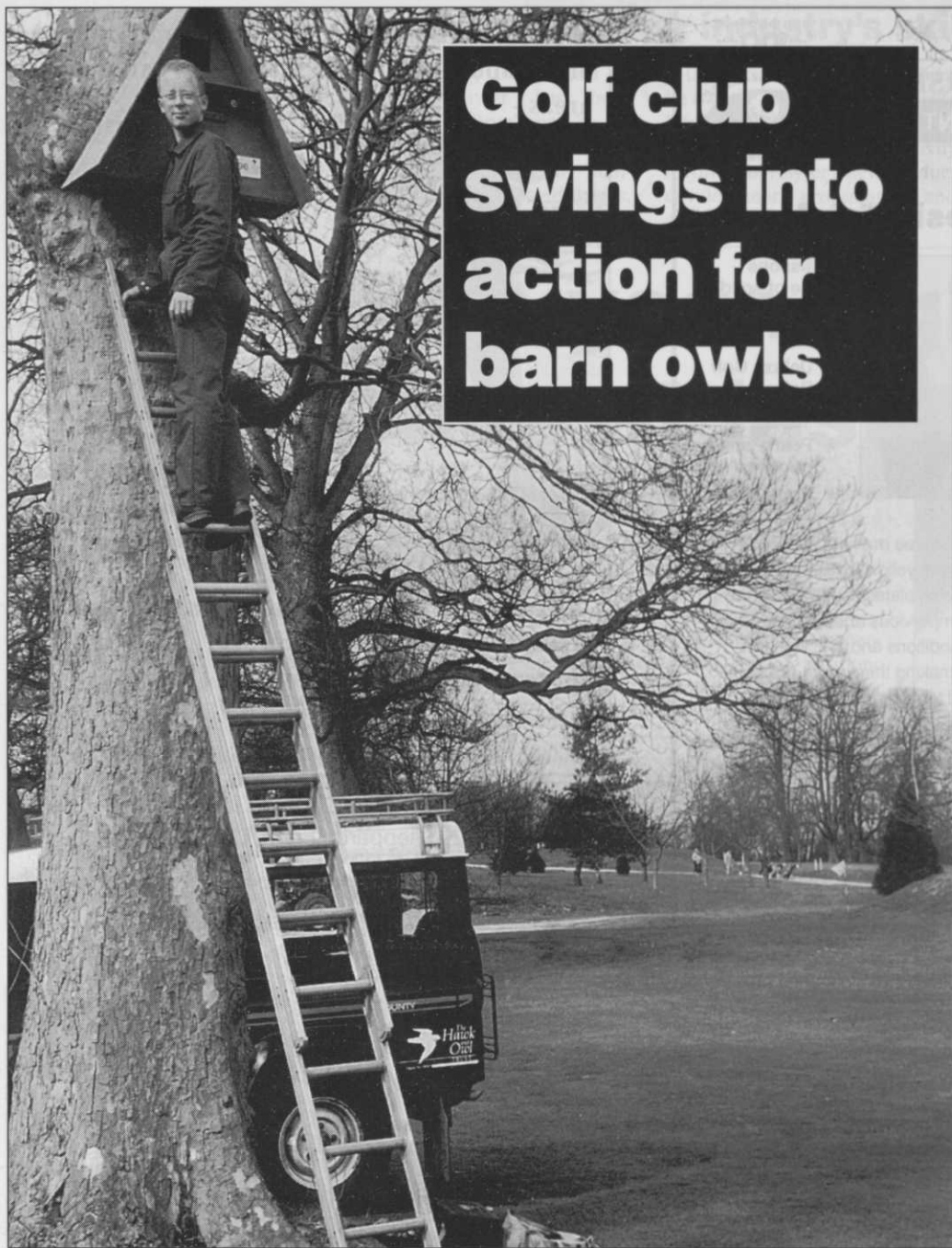


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A GROWING FORCE IN LEISURE

Golf club swings into action for barn owls



John O'Gaunt Golf Club's Steve Thompson inspects the nestbox put up by Colin Shawyer

Golf and wildlife conservation have joined forces again to offer a new home to a pair of barn owls – just in the nick of time before this spring's breeding season.

Steve Thompson, Greenkeeper at John O'Gaunt Golf Club, near Sandy, Bedfordshire, sent an SOS to specialist conservation charity The Hawk and Owl Trust. A pair of barn owls have traditionally nested in an old building on the golf course, but it was being restored and converted.

Hawk and Owl Trust Director of Conservation and Research Colin Shawyer went to the rescue with one of the Trust's new A-frame nest boxes which are proving particularly attractive to barn owls. But before putting up the box, he carefully selected an appropriate tree within easy reach of good, rough grassland hunting habitat, near to one of the practice greens.

"Now it's finger's crossed for the breeding season said Colin. "Although the building conversion will include a special space for the owls, it will take time for them to get used to it as a nesting site. Our immediate problem, therefore, was to find them a home for this year."

This summer Colin will also be monitoring the success of four different kinds of owl boxes which he put up two years ago at Northampton Golf Club. The club organised a special fund-raising tournament to enable the conservation work to go ahead.

"The Hawk and Owl Trust aims to carry out similar conservation work in partnership with other British golf courses," said Colin. "We hope clubs which are inspired by these examples will contact us so that we can get a nationwide programme under way."

"Many owls and other bird of prey species are still under pressure and we all need to do as much as we can to help them survive," explained Colin. "Golf courses can offer ideal habitat for owls – and if this doesn't already exist it can be created with just a little effort. But only then is there any point in putting up a nest box or basket."

Golf clubs which would like to become involved in this conservation initiative or to get a flavour of the work the Trust carries out may like to purchase a copy of the new booklet, Boxes, Baskets and Platforms (£3.75, UK postage and packing free).

Please write to Colin Shawyer, Director of Conservation and Research, The Hawk and Owl Trust, c/o Zoological Society of London, Regent's Park, London NW1 4RY.

Founder member quits AGMA

Statement from British Seed Houses

British Seed Houses has announced its resignation from the Amenity Grass Marketing Association (AGMA) which it helped form in 1981.

In a press statement British Seed Houses Managing Director, Neville Bark, commented "As one of the founder members of AGMA we are obviously saddened to be leaving the Association and it is a decision the company has come to only after lengthy consideration. However, we have for some time felt disappointed with the way the association was moving.

"The original objectives in setting up AGMA were quite clear. As well as ensuring that high quality products were available to end users, another key aim was one of education, as only with accurate knowledge about the relative merits of individual varieties, can consumers make informed decisions when purchasing seed.

"We now feel the company can better achieve these aims outside the association."

Reply from the Amenity Grass Marketing Association

AGMA (the Amenity Grass Marketing Association) was naturally disappointed in the resignation of British Seed Houses from membership of the Association.

In 1996 the membership has grown to include major European Breeders, UK Wholesale and Retail organisations that account for over 80% of the total UK sales of amenity grass seed.

We have seen an increase in our Distributor Members at the rate of two a month this year.

We have introduced new Affiliate Membership categories for Educational establishments – the STRI having become the latest to join the category.

AGMA's 'voice' is ever present on legislative matters – for we have just been thanked by the Seeds Division of Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries in bringing to their notice imported lawn seed packs that did not conform to the Seeds Marketing Regulations. Furthermore we are an active member on the Committee making recommendations on the review of the BS Standard for Turf production.

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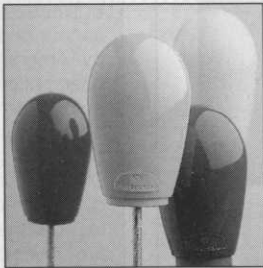
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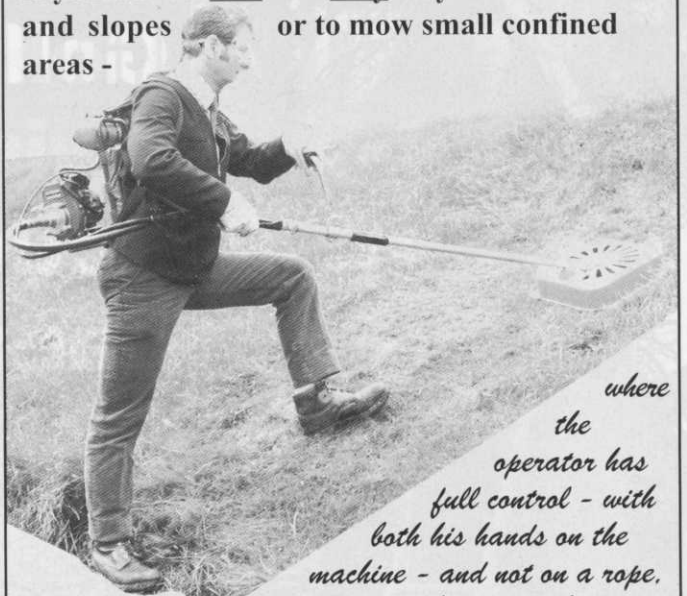
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AD REF 512

Does BIGGA need an Essex Section?

Over recent months there has been a great deal of debate about the need for an Essex Section of BIGGA.

It has been proposed that an Essex Section be formed as part of the South East Region and that the revised East Anglia Section be transferred from the South East to the Midlands Region. The proposal has been made purely on the number of current and potential members within geographical boundaries and the benefits of ease of access to Section events that the changes would produce.

A general meeting of interested members has been arranged for Thursday, June 27 at 7pm at Ravenwood Hall, Hotel, Rougham, which is approximately four miles east of Bury St Edmunds off the A14.

The proposal is only viable with sufficient support and members interested in learning more or in having their opinions heard are urged to attend. If the proposal is adopted then there may be vacancies for Section Committee members for both East Anglia and Essex.

Think about the proposed change and talk to your colleagues.

How will it affect you?

Come to the meeting and have a say in how your Association is organised.

Richard Gamble, Head Greenkeeper at Aldwark Manor, home of BIGGA HQ, can be seen on a new piece of machinery

lately after taking possession of a Hayter T93 Greensmower Triple.

"It is a superb machine and I'm absolutely delighted with what we have done with it in the short time it's been here," said Richard.

Richard is pictured aboard the machine in the company of Geoff Platt, Director of Golf at Aldwark Manor and Hamish Macfie of Hayter, who sold the machine.



David brings other industry's skills to new market

The Marketing Department at Hayter has been strengthened by the recent appointment of Marketing Manager, David Briggs, pictured.



David comes from Pifco, where he was the Brand Manager for the Pifco and Tower brands.

He is already becoming heavily involved in Hayter's new product development programme and strategic planning.

Being responsible for both the domestic and professional product ranges, as well as studying for an MBA at The Bradford Management Centre, will ensure a hectic life style for David, who looks forward to the demands of his new role.

Five year nightmare ends at last

A five year campaign of bullying and intimidation came to an end for David Robinson when he was awarded almost £9,000 by an industrial tribunal against his golf club.

David, who until last November was First Assistant at Hallowes Golf Club, at Dronfield in Derbyshire, was the victim of a series of jokes and incidents originating from his dyslexia which culminated in the Head Greenkeeper being formally cautioned by the police for threatening behaviour after he drove a van at David forcing him to jump out of the way.

The tribunal, held in Sheffield, ruled that 33 year-old David had been constructively dismissed because his confidence had been shattered by the harassment he had received and the failure of the golf club to provide a proper and safe system of work which constituted a breach of his confidence and trust in the club.

"The last six months has left a bitter taste in my mouth. It's been a very traumatic experience for, not only myself, but Lynn, my wife, and our eight year-old Thomas," said David, after the tribunal's verdict.

"I feel justice has been done and I've been vindicated. I'm glad that I took the action because although I might not get a job again it might stop someone else having to go through the trauma I've been through."

David's victory owed much to the assistance he received by a lawyer recommended and paid for by Hambro - the legal protection service which comes as part of BIGGA membership.

"There was no way I could have afforded the costs of taking a case like mine to an industrial tribunal," he said.

"Hambro couldn't have been more helpful. I chose the legal firm I wanted and Hambro recommended the lawyer from that firm whom they knew was the employment expert - Peter Meldrum. I must have had 10 meetings with him in preparation for

the case," said David, just as Lynn emerged from the kitchen to say that Peter Meldrum had been on the phone to see how he was.

"In the past many people in similar positions would have had to back off because they wouldn't have been able to pay a lawyer. It allowed me to get better and not worry about how I was going to pay my legal fees if I lost. It took a great deal of stress and strain off the family."

David, who estimates that the cost of the legal support he received was approaching £3500, has advice for other greenkeepers who find themselves in a similar position.

"If they were frightened to go to their Chairman of Green they should go through Hambro and the new enhanced BIGGA scheme brought in this April," recommended David, who benefited from the old scheme which required him to resign before he was eligible for help.

The new scheme means members may be eligible for representation at internal disciplinary hearings and this may prevent the stage where jobs are lost being reached.

David is currently trying to get another job and is not ruling out a return to greenkeeping although he is exploring other avenues as well.

"I've just become qualified as a special needs swimming teacher for the disabled and those with learning difficulties and I'm looking at a career in that. I might also set up my own landscaping business or something else. I'll cross that bridge when I come to it but I'll certainly not sit back. I'm going to rebuild my life," said David, who also stood as a candidate in the recent local



The suffering's over: David and his eight year old son, Thomas

elections.

The driving force behind David's recovery has been Lynn, whom he credits with pulling him through the nightmare.

"Lynn has been great. In November I was at my lowest ebb with the pressure of dealing with the case and the thought that I was going to lose everything was getting too much for me. It was Lynn who made sure I survived and I've come out of it a stronger person."

"We're glad it's all over. It's a chapter closed in our lives and it's time to open another."

David also thanked everyone who helped him. "Lynn, all my family and friends, Hambro, Peter Meldrum, my doctor and my therapist, have all been wonderful."

"I would also like to say that the BIGGA subscription is worth every penny that you pay definitely because you get personal accident cover, legal cover so if anything does happen and you need help it's there."

Not Very Qualified? Now

National Vocational Qualifications are often misunderstood but David Golding, Education Director for the Greenkeepers Training Committee, and Ken Richardson, Education Officer for BIGGA, will attempt, over the next few months, to take away some of the mystery which leads to so much confusion. This month they answer some of the most frequently asked questions.

1. What are National/Scottish Vocational Qualifications?

David Golding: National or Scottish Vocational Qualifications have been introduced by the Government to industries in order to improve the skills of the British workforce.

NVQs are for England, Wales and Northern Ireland and SVQs for Scotland. They are based on national standards of competence and can tell you exactly what someone is capable of in terms of skills, knowledge and ability.

Greenkeepers can achieve N/SVQs at their place of work and now even the mature greenkeeper with no formal qualifications but years of experience can get qualified.

2. How do greenkeepers get on a course?

Ken Richardson: The easy answer is to say that they should apply to their local college but this is only part of the answer as not all greenkeepers need to attend a course of instruction in the traditional sense before gaining a vocational

qualification, ie. prove competence. There are three main routes to gaining vocational qualifications. These are:

a. **The College Route.** For greenkeepers entering the profession without any recognised greenkeeping qualifications, or as Modern Apprentices, the college route is still the best way to gain the knowledge and skills of greenkeeping. However, the best place to show competence, ie the ability to do the job, is at the place of work. These assessments will, eventually, all take place on the golf course.

b. **Modern Apprentices** Modern Apprentices will use the college route to gain knowledge and skills, with assessment taking place at their place of work. However funding for their training is guaranteed, through the Greenkeepers Training Committee, until they show competence at level 3 N/SVQ. More information is available on the Modern Apprenticeship from the GTC

c. **Prior Learning Route** Greenkeepers who have been in the industry for some time, without gaining a qualification, or who hold an out dated qualification, can gain vocational qualifications by proving to an assessor that they are competent to do their job. Using this route means that greenkeepers could gain a formal greenkeeping qualification without attending a college course. However, others may need some top-up training, to reach the required standard. Many of the GTC Approved Colleges are now starting to offer this option.

3. Do all greenkeepers need NVQs?

Ken: No, currently, they don't. However, I feel that the greenkeeping profession can move forward and improve its status only when all greenkeepers have or are working towards a vocational qualification.

4. How will they benefit the greenkeeper and the golf club?

David: Golf Clubs offering N/SVQs show a commitment to the employees and provide opportunities for both career and personal development, improving motivation and enhancing performance.

N/SVQs can help to ensure the workforce is well trained and has the up-to-date skills for improved performance.

The qualifications can also be used for recruitment as job descriptions can be designed by referring to the standards which list the skills and knowledge the person the club recruits will need.

While the N/SVQs do not specify any particular kind or training programme the GTC will ensure that colleges, STRI, BIGGA and other training providers link their training to the national standards

For the greenkeepers N/SVQs offer recognition for the skills they already possess and use in their day to day work. The qualifications are available no matter what age the candidate is, or at what stage they are in their career.

There are no entry requirements. They can

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