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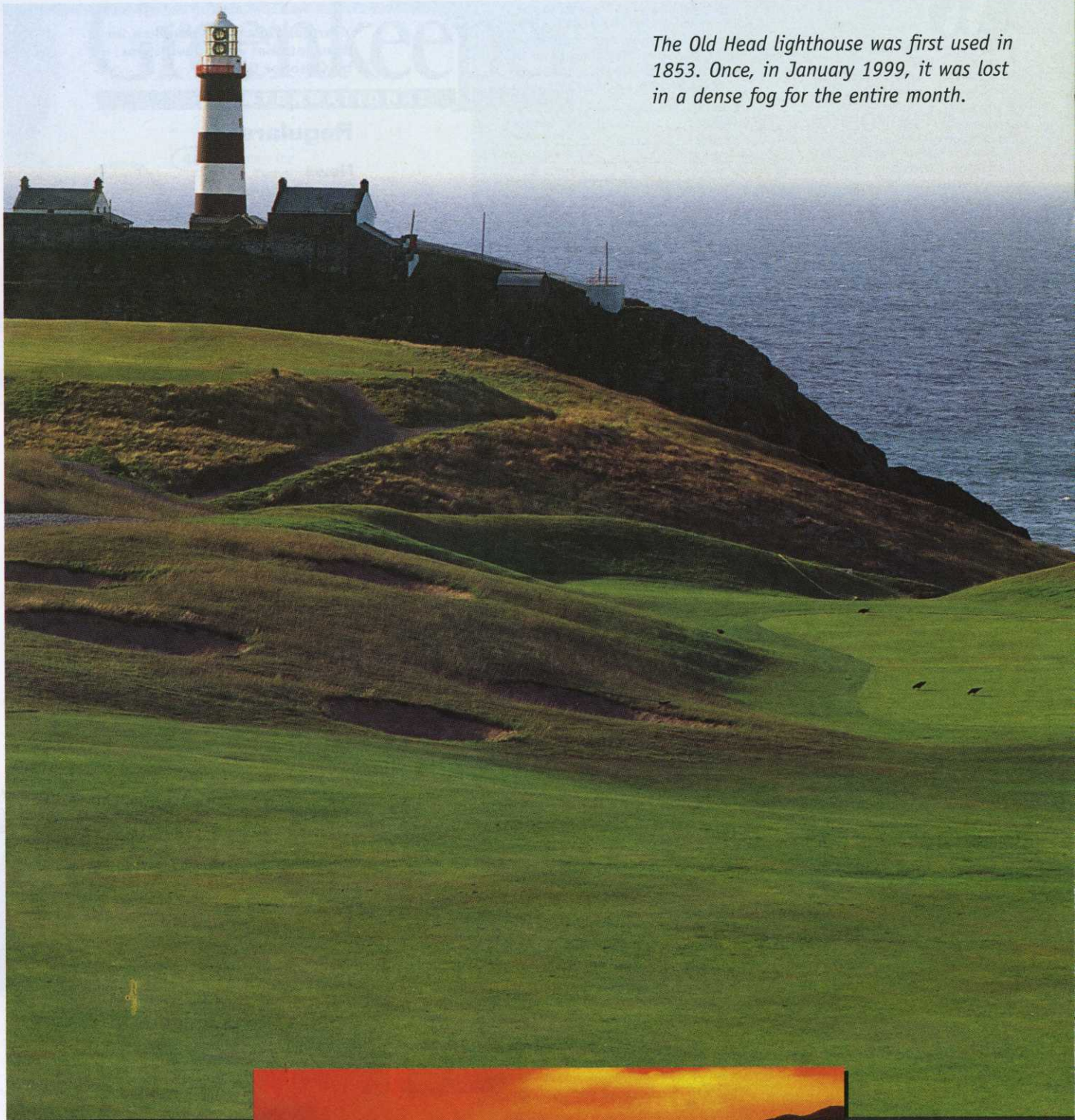
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Your next issue of Greenkeeper International will be with you by October 6, 2000

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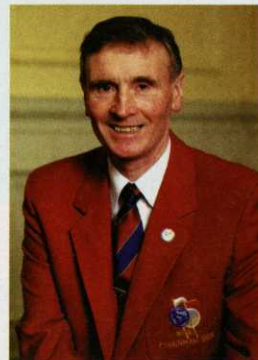
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Greenkeeper

The official monthly magazine of the British & International Golf Greenkeepers Association

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The advertising copy deadline for inclusion in the October 2000 edition of Greenkeeper International is Monday, September 11, 2000

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Circulation is by subscription. Subscription rate: UK £36 per year; Europe and Euro £46. The magazine is also distributed to BIGGA members, golf clubs, local authorities, the turf industry, libraries and central government.

ISSN: 0961-6977

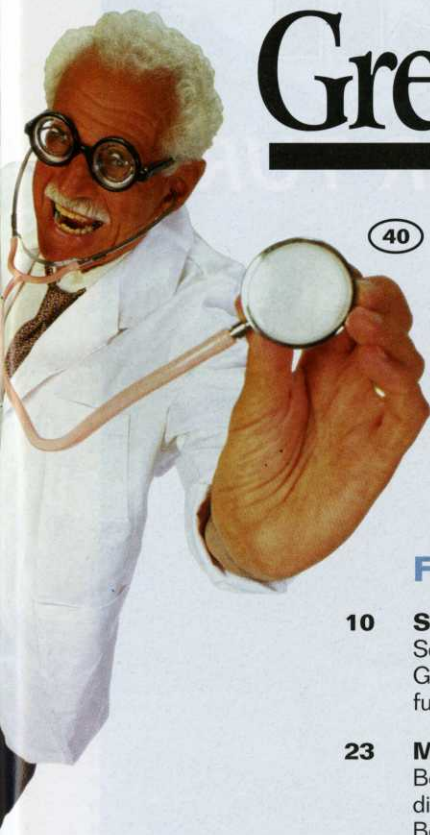
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Greenkeeper

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A degree of accuracy?

Chris Woodhead, the Chief Inspector of Schools, wrote recently of his concerns regarding "vacuous" degree courses that are now being offered by nation's universities and colleges, describing them as "quasi-academic degrees".

To highlight his point he listed some of the prime culprits - Knitwear, Media Studies, Beauty Therapy and Pig Enterprise Management. However, the degree course with which he chose to launch his list was Golf Course Management.

He followed this up, in the article printed in The Sunday Times, by adding- "what is the point of students completing a course only to find that their degree adds little or nothing to their career prospects".

The comments were jumped on by the media and other courses were soon lumped in among those initially mentioned including Madonna Studies, Beer making, Contemporary Circus and Stand-Up Comedy.

It gave the opinion shapers of the day the chance to mount their soap boxes and have a pop. Ruth Lea, the Head of Policy at the Institute of Directors, commented that employers had given these degrees the real thumbs down.

"What is worrying about many of these degrees is that they don't give specific skills and they are not even particularly academically rigorous," she announced to the press.

In fairness to Chris Woodhead, in general terms the point he was making had some validity. While ideal for evening classes, hobbies should have little place as full blown degree courses.

However, I would hope that given time to reflect on his comments he might feel that Golf Course Management should be excluded from the shamed list.

I don't know if Chris Woodhead is a golfer but I'd wager that he has little idea of what is taught on a Golf Course Management Course. If he did he would know that it includes Plant Biology and Physiology; Turf Grass Microbiology and Horticultural Biotechnology and that students are prepared for the monumental demands that are placed on the modern day Golf Course Manager.

All are academically taxing subjects and prepare the student for the rigours of the outside world. Students who have completed such courses can command healthy salaries from golf clubs and look forward to long and rewarding careers. In fact the courses represent everything that a modern degree course should.

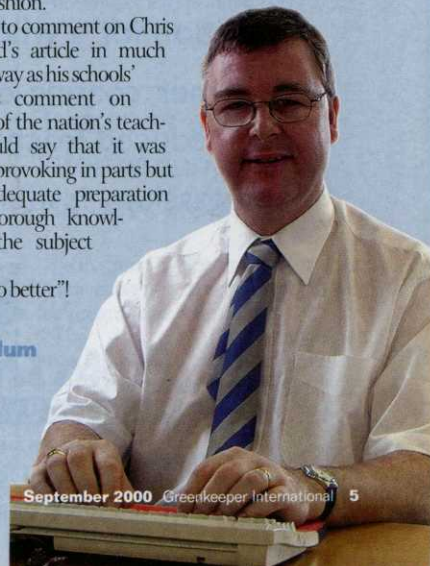
Let's face it, many traditional degree courses don't exactly offer a direct route into the employment market. How many jobs for Fine Art Critics or Mediaeval Historians do you see advertised in Job Centres?

The whole affair is yet another example of those with limited knowledge jumping to conclusions that people who work on golf courses do little more than cut grass and empty litter bins. It can only be damaging for green-keeping's educational courses to be derided in such a cavalier fashion.

If I were to comment on Chris Woodhead's article in much the same way as his schools' inspectors comment on the work of the nation's teachers I would say that it was "thought provoking in parts but lacking adequate preparation and a thorough knowledge of the subject matter.

"Must do better"!

Scott MacCallum
Editor



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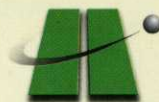
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Top environmental award for BIGGA

BIGGA's contribution to Environmental Best Practice 2000 was recognised at the national Green Apple Awards ceremony in London. The gold award was made in recognition of the Association's development of the BIGGA Golf Environment Competition and its commitment to advancing the message of environmental responsibility and stewardship to greenkeepers, golfers and trade companies. The award also recognises BIGGA's positive impact in environmental matters on both the general and environmental media.

This is an appropriate time therefore to recognise again the vision of Rod Baker, Managing Director of Amazone, in originally establishing this competition in 1995. Since 1997 we have worked with Rod in promoting the competition which he remains totally committed to developing. Entries from golf clubs continue to rise each year and there is undoubtedly a growing national awareness of the competition which is leading to a much greater understanding of the positive aspects of golf clubs in terms of protecting the environment.

We should also recognise the major contribution which is made by Bob Taylor, Senior Ecologist for the STRI, and Dr Keith Duff, Chief Scientist of English Nature, as the competition judges. Their expertise and professional approach has done much to establish the credibility of the competition since 1995.

This year's Golf Environment Competition is again supported by Amazone, together with the R&A, and we thank them for their backing and recognition of the value of this competition.



BIGGA Chairman Elliott Small receives the Gold Green Apple Award 2000 at a presentation ceremony in The Cafe Royale, London.

Within BIGGA we will continue to develop awareness of environmental issues relevant to golf courses and promote the adoption of best practice guidelines. BIGGA will continue to stimulate action and debate in relation to the 'Committed to Green' initiative. While taking pleasure in receiving this national award there is a realisation within BIGGA that there is still much work to be done in envi-

ronmental matters. We need to be vigilant of the anti-golf brigade and seek to ever increase public awareness of the positive impact of golf courses as well as highlight to the conservation bodies that golf can be an acceptable land use providing valuable wildlife corridor habitat throughout the countryside.

Neil Thomas

Centenary idea for BIGGA Library

As you all know BIGGA has a large and growing library of books in the BIGGA HOUSE, ranging from those of a general golfing nature through to more educational technical tomes.

On the suggestion of senior Scottish member, Cecil George, we would like those members whose clubs are about to celebrate a centenary, or have done so recently, to send in a copy of their club centenary book so that a new section can be made in the BIGGA library.

If you wish to make a contribution please send your book to BIGGA HOUSE, Aldwark, Alne, York YO61 1UF so it can become part of the Association's library.

Ernest Doe are awarded Textron franchise deal

Ernest Doe & Sons Ltd has been awarded the Textron Turf Care & Specialty Products franchise for East and West Sussex following the withdrawal by SCATS from the grounds care sector.

The company began operating from the former SCATS grounds care division premises at Frenches Corner in Billingshurst at the beginning of August.

This move establishes Ernest Doe and Sons Ltd as the largest Textron dealer in the UK with a total of 16 branches throughout East Anglia and South East England.

TH White Ltd, Textron's dealer based at Tetbury in Gloucestershire and with a branch at Reading in Berkshire, will take over the remaining SCATS territory that includes Hampshire and the Isle of Wight.

Peter Bell, Sales Director at Textron, commenting on the reallocation of territories said,

"I am particularly delighted that Ernest Doe & Sons and TH White have been able to step in and very swiftly provide a continuity of service to our customer base in Sussex and Hampshire. These are two of our premier dealers with established reputations in all aspects of grounds care and I am confident that they will provide exceptional levels of service in their new territories."

Turfgrass science information offered via new website

Penn State's Center for Turfgrass Science recently developed a web site for programme information.

The site contains educational programme information, research reports, outreach activities and faculty, staff, and graduate student contact information. The site address is <http://www.agronomy.psu.edu/>

BIGGA smashes the 7,000 barrier

007 is the most famous number in spying but in BIGGA the most long awaited number has been 7,000.

James Bond will always be 007 but 7,000 will now forever be the number connected to Kevin Dinsdale, of Northumberland Golf Club, who became BIGGA's 7,000th member.

"I must admit I was shocked to learn the news," said 39-year-old Kevin.

"I was going to join years ago but never got round to it, but I'm delighted that my timing has made me the 7,000th member," he explained.

His Head Greenkeeper, Gordon Proudfoot, was instrumental in keeping BIGGA in the forefront of Kevin's mind but it was only when Northern Regional Administrator, Doug Bell, paid a courtesy visit to the club and left the appropriate form that it pushed Kevin into sending in what turned out to be the lucky membership application form.

To mark the historic occasion Kevin was presented with a refund of his



Kevin Dinsdale (left) with his Course Manager, Gordon Proudfoot

membership cheque as well as a box of BIGGA logoed clothing, while Gordon was given a set of BIGGA videos and books for the club's use.

"I'm definitely going to remain a

member of BIGGA as the benefits make it really worthwhile," said Kevin, who is going to use some of his refunded money to buy Newcastle United's new away strip.

Scottish Golf Course Wildlife Initiative

The Scottish Golf Course Wildlife Initiative used The Open Championship at St Andrews as the ideal opportunity to spread the word about some of its recently launched projects.

"The reason we are distributing this information to a range of golfing, environmental and general media is in response to recent misinformed criticism of golf courses and their environmental impact," explained Senior Golf Course Advisor, Jonathan Smith.

"Particularly in Scotland, there has been much press and radio coverage recently, which has portrayed golf course management and development in a negative light. A great deal of this has been based on assumption and misunderstanding of how golf courses are managed, and the potential golf courses provide to protect and enhance the environment."

The pack which was distributed is designed to raise awareness among the media, and resultantly the wider public of the positive role golf courses can play in the environment, and the efforts currently being made by both the golfing and environmental sectors to make this positive situation continue.

Scottish Golf Course Wildlife Initiative, a partnership of golfing and environmental organisations funded by the Scottish Golf Union, the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews, Scottish Natural Heritage and the Scottish Greenbelt Foundation.

Further information can be obtained from Jonathan at The Scottish Golf course Wildlife Group, The Stables, Dalkeith Country Park, Midlothian, EH22 2NA Tel: 0131 660 9480 Email: scotgolf.wildlife@virgin.net

Support for Support Team



BIGGA's Open Championship Greenkeeping Support Team at St. Andrews this year were smartly turned out in polo shirts, caps and fleeces from BIGGA's logoed Slazenger range. The fleeces were sponsored by Rigby Taylor which are now available to all BIGGA greenkeepers through a product purchase incentive scheme which the company is running until October. The fleece makes a practical work wear garment for use around the golf course. Alan Halfyear, of Rother Valley Golf Centre and a member of the 2000 Support Team, is seen modelling the fleece in one of the Old Course's notorious bunkers.

John receives a surprise presentation

John Philp, Links Superintendent at Carnoustie's Golf Courses recently received his MBE for services to golf at Buckingham Palace and a couple of days later received a surprise presentation from his greenkeeping staff down on the golf course, writes Terry MacCallum

Championship Course Foreman, John Beattie, explained that the staff had got together and, using many of John Philp's most quoted phrases, had compiled a poem to mark his honour from the Queen as well as his achievements with the Carnoustie Courses.

"The poem was devised by the boys," he said.

The verses were superimposed on a computer-generated picture of John standing alongside James Braid, a five-times Open winner, who looked after the courses in the 1920s.

The framed poem was handed over at a surprise ceremony at the 10th hole.

John also received a presentation bottle of malt whisky and a cake, suitably decorated with a golfing theme. His wife Helen was also invited and was presented with a bouquet.

John said that the whole thing had come as a complete surprise, but confessed that the ceremony on the golf course on which he and his colleagues work so hard meant more to him than the visit to Buckingham Palace.

"But at least I knew I was going to Buckingham Palace," he quipped. "I knew nothing about all this."

His wife, Helen, added, "This means so much more when it comes from his own staff, the people he is with all the time."

When asked if the staff would be tasting the cake, John said that he thought they might have an early finish in order to sample it - which prompted several of his greenkeepers to question whether he had already been sampling the whisky!

Redesign provides greater access for disabled

The third course at Moor Park, operated by Three Rivers District Council as a public course now has its revised and renovated facilities - 18-holes course, 9-holes par 3 course and Academy, recently opened by Trevor Brooking, Chairman of the Sports Council.

The golf centre has been re-designed by Swan Golf Designs, golf course architects, to add to The Old Harry Colt designed course with a refurbished short course and a custom designed area with chipping and bunker practice complexes and a three tier putting green set to test all kinds of player with greatly varying abilities.

The project has been a partnership between The Local Authority and The Sports Lottery Fund who contributed nearly £400,000 towards the cost of the works, undertaken by John Greasley. Tees and bunkers throughout have been re-designed to allow access for disabled players and wheelchairs.



Gallacher opens new Oatridge course



Former Ryder Cup Captain, Bernard Gallacher, opened Oatridge College's new 9-hole golf course. He is seen here at the course pictured with Head Greenkeeper Andrew Forrest.

Gem Pro Invitation Tournament



John Davidson, Course Manager of Gatton Manor Hotel, Golf & Country Club, must be some sort of a masochist. Not only did his course play host to the Surrey Section at the end of June but at the beginning of August he found himself presenting a course to another 70 greenkeepers who this time were guests of Gem Professional. At the after dinner prize presentations Clive Pearson, Gem Professional Sales Manager, paid tribute to John and Gatton Manor for making such a contribution to a great day. John did have a consolation, he was good enough to score 35 points to come second on the day just beating his ex Deputy Tony Breiner on countback and pick up a prize! The winner was Nigel Colley (Roehampton G.C.) with 38 points. Nigel is pictured second from left together with his team who also won the Team Prize. Apart from the condition of the course, the organisation and the wonderful meal, there can be no doubt as to the highlight of the day. "Dangerous Dave" Delderfield completing more than 9 holes! Derek Farrington

Training scheme success for British Seed Houses

Customers of British Seed Houses can now claim over £3000 worth of free training thanks to the success of the company's Grade A Club launched at BTME earlier this year.

Turfgrass professionals who join the club are able to build up training credits based on the value of Grade A seed business done with the company. Partners in the scheme include BIGGA, IOG, STRI and LANTRA and the credits generated can only be redeemed for training courses and materials available from these organisations.

Club members also gain access to a discounted soil analysis service from IGER.

British Seed Houses' Director Simon Taylor said that the company had been delighted by the response to the scheme since its launch at BTME.

"The club has proved to be extremely popular with groundsmen, greenkeepers and professionals employed within the landscape industry. Membership is growing at over 40 registrations per month and by the end of June our customers had amassed at least £3000-worth of training credit. They can now start to use this credit – or keep building it up – to help fund training courses and educational materials from our four partners," he said

Top award for Reaseheath student

Reaseheath College greenkeeping student, Adrian Moss, has recorded an outstanding achievement in a City & Guilds qualification.

Adrian, Deputy Head Greenkeeper at Shrewsbury Golf Club, has been awarded a Silver Medal for Excellence for his work at NVQ Level 3 in Amenity Horticulture Sports Turf Maintenance.

The award is the highest accolade possible and Adrian was the only greenkeeper in the north-west to be selected as a prizewinner. The works of 205 students nationwide from different types of industry were chosen for special distinction.

Adrian has attended Reaseheath College in Nantwich one day each week, basing his academic studies on the practical duties he carries out at his workplace.

Greenkeeping lecturer, Martin Smith, said: "Adrian is typical of the quality of student attracted here. I am delighted that his high standard of work has been recognised."



Adrian Moss receives his Silver Medal from Dr Nick Carey (right) watched by his Course Manager Robbie Konieczka (left)

Adrian, of Minsterley, Shrewsbury, said: "It was a great honour to be awarded a Silver Medal. I enjoyed the course and I feel that education is always a bonus."

Shrewsbury Golf Club Greens

Chairman Graham Pennie stressed: "Our club has a high commitment to education. Over the past two years our golf course has benefited tremendously from the training which our staff have received."

Successful Open Day for Scottish Grass Machinery

An Open Day at Scottish Grass Machinery brought in £100,000 worth of new orders as well as proving an ideal opportunity to benefit from some customer feedback.

"It was our most successful open day yet. Among the invited guests was Neil Woodfin, the new Marketing Director of Textron Turfcare Specialty Products who came along to our new premises in Inverkeithing along with over 60 local authority customers representing 25 of the 32 local authorities. I think it is important to bring our customers face-to-face with manufacturers to give them feedback on the products the buy or hire," said Managing Director, David McInroy.

Neil was delighted with the feedback he got in Inverkeithing.

"The main points I picked up on from customers were that due to cuts in local government budgets, the number of times council grass is cut every year has been significantly reduced. This means they may need different machines to meet this change," said Neil.

The open day was also supported by Scottish Grass Machinery's other manufacturing partners: Renault, IPU/Ferris, Wiedenmann, GreenMech Chippers, GambettiBarre Sprayers and Victa.

Royal Inverdivot GC...

by Tony Husband



The new Chief Executive of the STRI is a man who combines a fine scientific mind with a keen business brain. He is also well known to a great many BIGGA members...

STRIVING TO BE THE BEST



Gordon McKillop joined the STRI having spent 22 years working for the Central Science Laboratory, in York, the last eight as initially, Science Manager, and more recently the Commercial Business Strategy Manager.

It was during the last five years that he became involved with BIGGA working with Education and Training Manager, Ken Richardson, in the devising and delivering of a series of Control of Mammals courses throughout the BIGGA Regions.

"I built up a very good relationship with BIGGA and through that wrote sections for books written by Bob Taylor,

sory work or knowing what is involved in winning a research contract, delivering it and following it up afterwards," said Gordon, speaking at a meeting organised to give him the chance to meet some of the local and industry press.

"Having this background gives me credibility with the staff and with the large number of clients with whom we are involved," explained Gordon, among whose accomplishments is the development of grids to prevent rabid rats and foxes using the Channel Tunnel to enter the UK.

His more recently acquired business skills, he gained an MBA from Henley

to a more structured approach to work.

"The way I would see things going eventually is that each area of the STRI's business will be given a strategic thrust. We'll look at what we hope to develop over the next few years. But at the same time having an element of serendipity about the whole thing so that if people see interesting areas that have potential for development they are free to follow them. This would be rather than the other way round with things going forward serendipitously with the odd strategic branch.

"People here are bright and intelligent and know what they are doing and I want to encourage them to seek opportunities that we can develop but not rush off at tangents. We want to do them in a considered manner bearing in mind what the implications would be for the main strategy," he explained.

He is also keen to find out why people go to the STRI in the first place and learn a little more about the Institute's competitors.

"I want to find out what they are doing and how we can differentiate ourselves from them. The advisory areas are becoming much more competitive than they once were."

There will be no quick fixes at Bingley; however, and seasoned observers looking for radical changes in the outward appearance of the Institute in the immediate aftermath of Gordon's appointment may draw blanks.

"I'm worried about bringing in things piece meal and I'd rather take a steady look forward in the way we develop these plans. I'd certainly hope that by the end of the year things are beginning

to develop and it may be more of the same, it may be less of the same. But certainly within that period I'd be looking to make internal changes in terms of improving communications; looking at the way staff are training and looking at the internal links between different parts of the organisation.

"So initially more changes will take place internally affecting the staff rather than externally."

He is hoping that his scientific expertise will not be left to rust and he has already discussed various projects to look at wildlife on golf courses compared with adjoining agricultural land with Bob Taylor, the STRI's Senior Ecologist.

"Golf has a bad image but there is no science to justify it so we are looking at it from an experimental perspective," he revealed.

Gordon's ultimate aim, he calls it his Holy Grail, is to have the research and advisory sides of the STRI working in such a way that they are creating work for each other.

"I want to make sure that the information we get from the "Good of Sport" research, funded by bodies like the R&A and the Football Association, goes out to our advisors and they use it and that the advisors, in turn, see problems and issues arising out on golf courses that could benefit from research and that they come back and advise the research staff who then submit research proposals to the funding bodies. That's my Holy Grail. To make sure that all elements are working together and feeding back to one another," explained Gordon, who is a 48-year-old native of Glasgow.

I think it would be very difficult to do this job without a research and advisory background

the STRI's Senior Ecologist. Thanks to that I got to know Mike Canaway (his predecessor as STRI Chief Executive) and when I considered applying for the job I went to various people to discuss what their perceptions were of the Institute.

"The feeling I came away with was that it had a very diverse business, a very professional staff, it gave value for money and that there was considerable potential to develop the service.

He is confident that his strong scientific background will be a huge asset in his new post.

"I think it would be very difficult to do this job without a research and advisory background — without really knowing what's involved in doing advi-

Management College, enabled him to attract income while at the Central Science Laboratory and he is confident those same skills will be of great benefit in his time in Bingley.

"Having spent my first month getting to know the staff I'm now at the stage of finding out how the business works and deciding upon the various options for developing it. Once we have done this I will develop implementation plans to take them forward in conjunction with staff and those involved in the wider industry.

"I'm looking at sensible controlled expansion," he added.

He is currently working on developing a business plan for the Institute while he is keen to marry staff initiative