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R & A RENEW SUPPORT

In his opening speech at Harrogate which is summarised below, Mr Michael Bonallack, Secretary of the R & A Golf Club of St Andrews, confirmed that the R & A had decided to continue its support for a further 3 years. While no figures were mentioned, it is understood that this will be substantial.

"I have a dual role here today. The first is to officially open the second European Turf Management Exhibition and the second is to join with the Nature Conservancy Council in launching their new publication "On Course Conservation" - the R & A views both events to be of significant importance to all golfers.

It is just over four years since the R & A agreed to give financial assistance to the formation of a reorganised Greenkeepers Association to be known as the British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association and so pleased are we with the progress and success of the Association, that the committee has decided to continue its support for a further three years.

What progress has been made under the leadership of Neil Thomas?

The membership now stands at 3,500 with over a thousand new members joining in 1989 alone. David Golding has developed a first class educational programme and of utmost importance in this particular sphere is the introduction of the Master Greenkeeper Certificate Award which will be proof and recognition of the highest standards of education.

These educational programmes are having a considerable impact - not only within the greenkeeping profession but also in gaining positive recognition from the home unions and their affiliated golf clubs.

The official publication of the Association, "Greenkeeping Management", has quickly become recognised as the leading magazine dealing with greenkeeping matters with subscription sales exceeding 4,000 copies a month.

Golf greenkeepers now have an active and thriving association of which they can be justifiably proud.

The 2nd European Turf



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Management Exhibition was originally sponsored by BIGGA but from now on it is to be organised and managed by them as well. This exhibition and the accompanying seminars are a happy coming together of the greenkeeping profession with industry associated with turf management and on show is a comprehensive range of products and services which indicate the tremendous growth of interest in this field and the ever increasing new developments taking place. For those with the responsibility for managing golf courses there can be no better forum for updating their knowledge and discussing common areas of interest.

It is only right and proper that those concerned with course management and indeed those also concerned with creating new golfing facilities should have foremost in their minds the conservation of wildlife.

As Walter Hagen once said: "Never worry, to never hurry and be sure to have the time to smell the flowers along the way."

Golf started probably sometime in the 15th Century as a game which developed from natural surroundings. Even the holes were probably old rabbit holes and the clubs, Shepherd Crooks, - the balls either sheeps dung or stones. Now of course golf courses are constructed and involve major

works - and it is thus even more important that designers and constructors take the greatest possible care that their work is sensitive to the needs of the environment and to the wildlife that exists on these sites. The same concern must also be shown by greenkeepers and green committee chairmen who have the responsibility of maintaining both old and new courses.

The R & A is very aware of this and I can tell you that at least two of the Open Championship courses contain sites of special scientific interest and great care is taken at the time of an open to ensure their protection. — We were therefore delighted to be given the opportunity of making an even more positive contribution to nature conservation when approached by the Nature Conservancy Council, represented here to-day by Ian Dair and Mike Schofield, asking us to sponsor the publication of a booklet on "On Course Conservation" — A Guide To Managing Golf's Natural Heritage."

The message it contains is fully endorsed by the R & A — "Is our course being managed with wildlife in mind?" — and this is not just aimed at those courses which do have designated SSSI's but at every single course in the country.

In these times when so many species of plants and animals are endangered by so called

progress it is good to think that golf has a tremendous opportunity to reverse this trend and I heartily commend to you this book, not only for the effect it will have in conserving wildlife — but because its suggestions will make golf courses more interesting, and the game more enjoyable.

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H & R Fell and Sons Ltd of Barton-on-Humber, South Humberside, known as Lindum Turf, confirmed at ETME 2, their intention to provide substantial financial sponsorship for the Association's new Greenkeeping Yearbook. To be launched at this year's Open Championship at St Andrews the yearbook will be the only officially published record of its kind in Europe. In announcing their decision, Steven Fell, said: "We take delight in making this move. 1990 has already proved to be an exciting year for us with the announcement of our successful tender for the supply of turf to the 1991 National Garden Festival, the introduction of our unique polymer coated seeds and the opportunity to support a progressive association such as BIGGA.

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Debbie Savage, BIGGA's Administration Officer, has confirmed that the official attendance figures for ETME was 4062 which represents more than double the 1989 figure. Debbie commented "We were delighted with this result despite the inclement weather. The trade have generally expressed complete satisfaction with the exhibition with many exhibitors already confirming that they will support the 1991 show".

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Greenkeeping Management's Publicity Director, Barry Poole, has also confirmed that applications for membership continue at a very high level. He said at the show: "We were always confident that the service, the education programme and the magazine would have a positive effect on recruitment. Little did we realise how positive! In addition to over 1100 new members joining during 1989, with the vast majority of these in the last 26 weeks of the year, new applications during January have been averaging about 40 to 50 per week".

More about ETME 2 and the 1991 Show next month.