

GOLF

GREENKEEPING

and Course Maintenance

The Official Magazine of the
British Golf Greenkeepers'
Association

Founded 1912

The Association is affiliated to the
English and Welsh Golf Unions

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Golf Greenkeeping and Course Maintenance is published by: Wharfedale Publications Limited, P.O. Box 12, Wetherby, West Yorkshire LS22 4SR. Telephone: (0937) 63181. Published ten times per year. Copies for non-members by subscription, £10.00 a year. Single Copies £1.50 postage paid. Published for the British Golf Greenkeepers' Association by: Wharfedale Publications Limited.

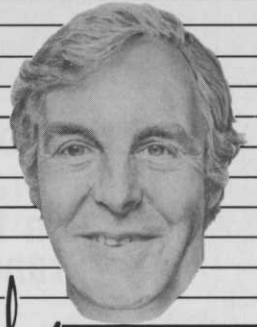
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Printed by: W. Kristall Ltd., Leeds.

Published by:

JOHN LELEAN,
Wharfedale Publications Limited
P.O. Box 12, Wetherby,
West Yorkshire LS22 4SR
Telephone: (0937) 63181

Greenside Comment...



John Lelean

Waves of apprehension among the Meadow Grass

The widely reported decision of an Industrial Tribunal in Dundee that the Head Greenkeeper at Carnoustie was fairly dismissed has created a few ripples through the ranks of the greenkeeping profession.

Carnoustie has not hosted the Open Championship since 1975. It was reported they had been told the course would not be retained on the R&A list if they continued to use a phosphate fertiliser, which encourages the growth of annual meadow grass.

According to evidence given to the tribunal, the Head Greenkeeper was given a second written warning after a visit to the course by the consultant agronomist to the R&A. He was dismissed in June 1985 following a further visit by the consultant who stated "the course would hardly pass muster as a third rate suburban track". The tribunal was also told six tonnes of phosphate fertiliser had been applied to the fairways, only weeks before his dismissal and against the advice of the R&A's consultant.

Since the sacking and under the new Head Greenkeeper appointed last November dramatic improvements have been made to the course including the rebuilding of 36 bunkers though the fairways were said "to be still contaminated with ryegrass".

Against this weight of evidence the Tribunal found the dismissal was fair on the grounds of 'gross mismanagement and incompetence'.

Greenkeepers throughout the land have now expressed concern for their future careers should they deviate from the advice of the consultant agronomist. Greenkeeping is not the same as it was 20 years ago for the majority of courses in this country. The growth of the game has increased out of all proportion to the number of new courses under construction, with the resultant pressure on the greenkeeper to provide an acceptable playing surface seven days a week for most of the daylight hours.

Techniques, philosophies and policies change, because we are living in dynamic times. Keeping abreast of change is now part of a greenkeepers principle function.

New techniques are bound to lead to divergence of opinions, those for and those against. Neither right nor necessarily wrong. It might be just a matter of timing, or the vagaries of a British climate which will be the deciding factor in an adjudication by laymen, who do not know their poa from their fescue.

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Next Month

There is no magazine in August. The next issue in September will feature the Windsor Show, the BGGGA Annual Tournament and all the latest information on the proposed amalgamation of the Association.