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To my knowledge, most head greenkeepers prepare annual budgets for their respective clubs and, once approved, work within accepted limits. To do this effectively one must have up-to-date prices and I am thus bound to ask 'why is it so difficult to get these from stockists?'

Writing in late April, I have received just one 1992 price list, and this came through the pages of Greenkeeper International. When requesting lists the excuse offered is often that they are still 'at the printers' or 'one will be sent' (still waiting!) and I am prompted to ask: why are they not printed at the same time as brochures, which are always in abundant supply?

Do stockists resist sending them for fear of price comparisons, or are they just saying to themselves 'greenkeepers need the products anyway, so why bother?'

I would like to think this letter will bring me some price lists, and would urge suppliers to send brochures only when they can be backed up with prices.

SAM MORRISON Head Greenkeeper, Royal Aberdeen GC, Scotland

I am writing to you to raise the subject of dyslexia. Over the last couple of years we have been in the process of getting help for our son, aged ten. Well, what has this to do with greenkeeping people you may ask? I shall try to explain.

We came to realise that our son was having learning difficulties, particularly in reading, writing, and also in short term memory, although he had no trouble solving practical problems. We took him to the Dyslexia Institute for assessment. The report confirmed our fears - in spite of an IQ of 120, specific learning difficulties were identified.

It was in conversation with the psychologist that she told us the Institute had been consulted by an agricultural college to advise of ways they might identify and help students who have problems. It had become apparent to the college that agriculture tends to attract a higher than average number of people who have some form of learning problem and greenkeeping must be included in this.

With more and more emphasis placed upon written examinations, this, in some circumstances, could prejudice individuals with natural flair and ability from advancing to their full potential unless appropriate strategies are used and problems addressed. Our younger greenkeepers who feel their exam mark is below their ability at practical greenkeeping may well have a specific learning difficulty and should get specialist testing as soon as possible, as help should be available.

I think more discussion needs to take place on the subject in order to remove the cloud of academic failure from some of our able workers. How can the Association help? What can a head greenkeeper do if he believes one of his staff has a dyslexia problem?

More information about resources is available from local Dyslexia Institutes – details in local phone books or contact the Dyslexia Institute, 133 Gresham Road, Staines, Middlesex TW18 2AJ.

RICHARD HEASLIP
Harlainton Forest GC, Essex

I read with interest the articles (May G.I.) about water features on golf courses. Certain points led me to wonder how hazards such as these are now influencing the design of new courses in the British Isles. At Bank House they have 18 holes and a driving range in a limited site of just 120 acres. I presume that most of the 13 lakes must be used as safety zones between fairways, as opposed to being created for irrigation storage purposes or as part of the strategy of the course design.

I cannot admit to having visited the site, but the article gives the impression that the lakes are not in naturally occurring depressions which would normally collect surface water, especially when they are merely two feet deep.

What most interests me is the reason for creating all these lakes. I presume it is the 'Florida influence', as a majority of the resort courses in Florida feature lakes highly, but why? Is it to make the courses more difficult, or to improve the playability of the course, or is the real reason to provide further income for the developer in the resale of 'lake' lots? I think so, especially as they are becoming an increasingly profitable product in most pro's shops.
nowadays, often selling at a pre-
mium. One resort course I know on
the outskirts of Norwich undertakes
several dredging operations throughout
the year, a highly prof-
able exercise.
Surely this relates to the type of
course being offered to the golfer –
the developers of ‘Pay-as-you-Play’
courses are keen to keep players
moving as swiftly as possible. If a
golfer hits his ball into a lake, he
doesn’t have a choice – the ball is
irretrievable, he has to forget it and
play another. This means that five
minutes are not otherwise spent
looking for a ball in deep rough or
scrub and it keeps the golfers mov-
ing. (Unless of course the golfer
keeps playing each subsequent shot
into the lake!)
This, however, has a detrimental
effect on the standard of the golfer.
How can a player ever become prof-
cient at shots from different and
varying lies if the only hazards on
the course are water, closely mown
semi-rough or widely spaced staked
trees. Where is the rough and deep
rough?
I feel that the element of surprise
is, effectively, being removed by
incorporating an excessive amount
of lakes into a golf course design.
Maybe this is best explained by
the following analogy: two golfers tee
off down a par 4 hole, one hits his
ball into the rough and the other
into the rough and scrub. The latter
finds to his surprise and great pleasure
that his ball has come to rest in a clear
- allowing him a shot to the
green, with a chance of halving or
even winning the hole. He has, in
effect, been given a reprieve, but he
has still got to be able to play a
good recovery shot to take advan-
tage of the situation. This makes for
exciting golf. A lake allows for one
result only – unplayable: reload! As
a hazard it is so final, whereas deep
rough will always provide for the
possibility of another result – that
which is based on an element of
luck or good fortune.
Thinking back to some of the most exciting Open Championships,
this element has always provided
spectacle. Take, for instance, the
memorable final rounds of Watson
and Nicklaus at Turnberry in 1977.
The result was uncertain right
down to the final putt, and it almost
swung in Nicklaus’ favour after he
made a remarkable recovery shot
from a fortunate lie amongst
the gorse. Watson then proceeded to
hole his putt for a three from the edge
of the green. Watson was left with a
two footer to take the Champi-
Onship, a shot, which he confi-
dently holed.
Had Nicklaus’ tee shot drifted into
a lake as opposed to the gorse, the
Championship would have been
over before they had even reached
the final green. And what an antic-
limpient it would have been.
My point in writing is an attempt
to explain that there will always be
a strong objection against the move
towards golf as a water sport. It
can well appeal to golfers in the
USA but I fail to see it gaining
national approval in Britain.
Unless of course the golfers
relevance in having to keep
buying new balls.
Do not misunderstand me, though,
because invariably, care-
fully located and well designed
water features on a golf course can
provide the perfect effect or setting.
Depending upon the character of
the site, a lake can be considered
to be useful for several functions:
in providing water for drainage
purposes; as part of the strategy
of the golf course design when
a natural depression exists; or
for storage purposes for an irriga-
tion system. Ideally, though, the
later will not be visible from the main
tournament playing areas.
It is up to the architects of these
new courses to convince the devel-
opers that there are alternative ways
of creating a hazard. In many cases
I regard a lake as a ‘cop-out’ – where
the architect lacks the imagination
to provide something more stimulat-
ing. I appreciate that the flow of
golfers through these new facilities
has to be maintained, but surely
there has to be some compromise
somewhere and by this I mean to
provide some thick rough (or
heather and gorse) in strategic loca-
tions on the course to give the golfer
something to really get his teeth
into.

**Jonathan Gaunt**
(BA (Hons) Dip LA)
Golf Course Architect, Forest Gate,
London

For those sceptics amongst us
who sometimes question the stand-
ing and direction of our Association,
whilst suffering from a seemingly
terminal dose of apathy, I would
like to report on our (BIGGA Kent
Section) strides forward and
the recognition we are receiving.
David Wood and myself recently
attended a seminar organised by
the Kent Golf Union at Rochester and
Gobham GC, aimed at secretaries
and captains. David was invited to
talk on Greenkeeper Training,
something that would have perhaps
been unheard of at such an event in
the past. Other speakers included
Keith Wright, secretary of the EGU,
on the role and objectives of the
Union, Henry Wylie on the diversity
of golfing organisations and Derek
Pulford on the role of the County
Unions. Much time was devoted to
the speakers and delegates were
involved in what was an interesting
and lively debate, mainly inspired
by David’s address. It would be fair
to say that a minority of the dele-
gates embarked on a spree of
‘greenkeeper bashing.’
The usual confusions came to the
fore, similar to do greenkeepers
are trained, educated and skilled
in training? They then ask for better
wages and conditions or are
poached by other courses or organi-
sations’. ‘One of the newly con-
structed greens on my course is
appealing, it must be the green-
keeper’s fault (even though he
didn’t build it)’ and what yard stick
can we use to show ineptitude
and sack him!’ Also ‘why do greenkeep-
ers need managerial, accounting
and computer skills to cut grass’ –
this from the odd secretary no doubt
fearing for his job. These comments
were obviously counteracted by Keith
Wright, Brian Evans (KGU), David
and myself, and it is clear that the
Golf Unions and perhaps the major-
ity of delegates actively support our
efforts for a strong force of well
trained, educated and skilled green-
keepers.
One of the keys to all this will be
communication, with this seminar
demonstrating how in the past
this has been sadly lacking. I read
the journals of the EGU and the Secre-
taries Association and it is clear
from reading them that we all suffer
the same problems and difficulties
in carrying out our duties. These
seem to be the haphazard way some
Clubs are organised, the lack of
funds available and the lack of
active management policy in some
areas.
As Keith Wright was at pains to
point out, the EGU is the most
poorly funded Union in Europe,
although it caters for more golfers
and myself, and it is clear that the
Golf Unions and perhaps the major-
ity of delegates actively support our
efforts for a strong force of well
trained, educated and skilled green-
keepers.

On the one hand the architect
may well appeal to golfers in the
USA but I fail to see it gaining
national approval in Britain.

**Roger West**
Technical Director, Agriland Ltd.,
Bournemouth, Dorset

In July of this year, my husband,
Eric Palmer, will have served 50
years as a greenkeeper – 41 of those
as a head greenkeeper.
During his career he has worked
on just three courses, Sirwell Park in
Rotherham, Abbeydale in Sheffield,
and his present Club – Hickleton near
Barnsley.
His dedication to his work cannot
be surpassed and he is and always
has been a credit to his profession.
He has seen so many changes over
the years and I feel justly proud of
him – indeed I have learned quite a
lot myself.
Eric has been nominated by his
first assistant for the ‘Greenkeeper
of the Year’ award, but with
standing this I feel his 50 years of
dedication deserve recognition.

Mrs Margaret Palmer
Baly, Doncaster, S Yorkshire