F

or many greenkeepers this has not been a good year. Reports to Headquarters indicate that greenkeepers continue to be hauled before their green committees with the prime accusation being 'the state of the golf course'. There seems to be little regard for the cold days of May and June when the grass was not growing to be followed by a heatwave which in many cases burnt off what little grass had appeared. That is not to excuse the incompetent, idle greenkeeper but there is increasing concern within the Association at the treatment handed out by green committees often to men of vast experience where wisdom in greenkeeping matters would be difficult to deny. Frequently it seems that those who sit on green committees, professionals from many walks of life, act in an arbitrary and dictatorial manner which is quite alien to how they conduct their own businesses. At the receiving end is the greenkeeper and the result is stress and disillusion.

Greenkeepers are only too well aware, or should be, of the technical and practical expertise needed today to meet the highest standards of course maintenance. They labour under conditions unbeknown to their predecessors of twenty thirty years ago with the vast increase of traffic on golf courses and the demand for winter golf. The educational courses and programmes developed through BIGGA and the GTC in recent years have now set in place an educational structure which can accommodate greenkeepers at all levels. Even the mature greenkeeper, without pretensions to attend college, is catered for through the Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) Scheme as a means of recognising the experience of the years. In this day and age greenkeepers can only stand still at their peril. I believe that the great majority of greenkeepers, without pre-emption by a failure of the greenkeeper to communicate with the golf club membership, initially in one-to-one situations and through judicious use of the club’s noticeboard. Equally there is increasing evidence of the enlightened golf club allowing its Course Manager/Head Greenkeeper to address meetings of the general membership regarding the maintenance of the golf course and his role within the club.

Some Course Managers/Head Greenkeepers stand accused of lack of management expertise, and this after many years service. One is moved to ask exactly what has been going on during those years. If the employee concerned has stayed on with the club allowed that to happen? If the employee has sought to enhance his expertise has the club offered assistance towards his training and if not, why not? More often than not in these situations there are two sides to the argument and there needs to be a meeting of minds and compromise. I am not seeking to defend those who fail to meet acceptable standards. It is my belief, however, that even in this day and age most greenkeepers, by the very nature of their calling, remain industrious and concerned, as a matter of professional pride, to present their golf courses to the best possible standard. They can be frustrated by lack of resources and equally by the reluctance of clubs to budget for and support their training needs. Some clubs even object to their employees joining BIGGA as their professional association. Such restrictions are unnecessary and indeed clearly not in a golf club’s interests. The enhancement of knowledge must ultimately lead to higher standards of greenkeeping, better-maintained golf courses and the plaudits of the members. I’m sure that green committees do not enjoy having members complaining any more than greenkeepers enjoy incurring the wrath of green committees. There has to be a better way of running the show.

My plea therefore is for better communication, cooperation and understanding. Unemployed greenkeepers represent the worst possible scenario - most certainly for the individuals and equally certainly for the golf clubs who have to find successors who may or may not be more competent than the individuals being replaced. Whatever the rights and wrongs of dismissals in the current year, it reflects no credit on the game of golf and there has to be a better way forward. It lies in education and training, in conciliation rather than confrontation and in an ability for those vested with green committee responsibilities to take the broad rather than narrow view in understanding the pressures under which the modern greenkeeper has to operate as well as respecting his ever-increasing skills and knowledge.

The BEST piece of ADVICE I ever received

George Brown, Course Manager at Turnberry: “Learn to eat humble pie. You often have to do something that you don’t really want to do.”
French seminar puts you in picture

Packages are available to attend the International Exhibition for Maintenance and Upkeep of Golf Courses in Orleans, France, on November 18-20.

The packages which include three nights bed and breakfast at the Novotel Hotel in Orleans, lunch on Saturday, Sunday and Monday, buffet dinner on Friday and gala dinners with entertainment on Saturday and Sunday nights and entrance to the exhibitions, entrance to the lectures and all transfers from the hotel to the exhibition and restaurants costs 1760 French francs (approximately £220) another 600 francs for a single room. A simultaneous translation of the lectures in English will be made if there are sufficient non-French participants. Otherwise transcripts will be provided. Lectures include “Weed control of summer grasses” by agronomist JM Calderon-Rodriguez; “Time Management” by a speaker from the Business European Centre; “Irrigation Water Quality” by course designer Didier Comte; “Speed of the Greens” by agronomist Abdo Badra and “Safety, European Norms (material, phytosanitary products, users” by Christian Pisseau, of the National course in Paris.

Less formal events include a golf tournament at Bordes GC, a rugby match in Orleans and the gala dinners which are a “Mexican” evening and a “French Cancan” evening.

For further information contact M. Jean-Luc Duclos
Tel: 00 331 3475 8790 Fax: 00 331 3475 8789.

Owen’s now in charge of the Duke’s Course

Owen Browne, Head Greenkeeper at the new Duke’s Course in St Andrews – pictured – has been promoted to Course Manager.

Originally from Melbourne in Australia Owen was originally employed by Greenmaw (UK) as one of the construction team working on the course and specifically involved in the construction of the greens, tees and bunkers as well as the installation of the irrigation system.

He was promoted to Head Greenkeeper in November ’93 and was involved in the interviewing and directing of staff and the establishment and maintenance of all turf and landscape areas.

In his new position Owen’s duties will also include the ongoing maintenance and continued growing in of the new par-72 course and ensuring that the playing conditions laid down by course designer Peter Thomson are adhered to.

His Royal Highness the Duke of York attended the opening of the courses just prior to The Open Championship at St Andrews in July.

FLYING DIVOTS

■ Nigel Tyler has been appointed Technical Sales Representative to the Amenity Division of County Crops Ltd. He was previously employed by Rufford Top Dress Supplies Ltd.

■ Geoff Walley has been appointed Head Greenkeeper at the new Mobberley GC near Manchester.

■ Tony Dunstan, Course Manager at Mill Hill GC, Barnet, London has achieved his TDLB D32 and D35 assessor award at Oakland College, St Albans.

■ Club Car has signed a deal to continue as the official golf car supplier to the PGA until the year 2001, the PGA’s centenary.

The new agreement is for 10 Club Cars for use by the PGA’s seven regions and national headquarters’ field staff at pro-ams and tournaments.

■ The first edition of the Golf Owners Operators and Developers Directory has just been launched. It is aimed at giving a comprehensive list of all suppliers to the golf industry. It carries the names of 549 companies and classifies the services and products which they offer under 241 different headings.

It can be purchased direct from the publishers, Golf Business Communications Ltd, 5/7 High St, Dorchester-on-thames, Oxfordshire OX10 7HH for £15 inclusive of postage. For further information call 01865 341580.

■ In August’s issue we stated that Mike Ardley, was the Head Greenkeeper at Braintree Golf Club. The Head Greenkeeper at Braintree is, in fact, Kevan Sharpe who has been with the club for 17 years. Apologies for any embarrassment caused by the error.

The BEST piece of ADVICE I ever received

David Walden, Greenkeeper of the Year. Thorpe Wood and Orton Meadows in Peterborough: “Always try and better yourself. Never stand still and never think you’ve done learning.”

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Training courses will focus on practical aid

A further reminder for those greenkeepers considering attending this year’s supervisory and management courses, at Aldwark Manor and Elmwood College, next year’s Supervisory and Management courses in Ireland, the Midlands, the North, the South East and the South West, information on the BIGGA library and an update on the Massey Ferguson Machinery Workshops.

BIGGA SUPERVISORY AND MANAGEMENT COURSES

Applications for this year’s BIGGA Supervisory and Management Courses continue to come in. The courses, which proved to be very popular last year, provide greenkeepers with important supervisory and management skills. Be sure to reserve your place by returning the card in this magazine, together with a cheque for £117.50 to BIGGA HQ at Aldwark Manor. Head Greenkeepers who have not received any formal supervisory or management training should advise their clubs that grants of £150 may be available from the GTC to help with the cost of sending their greenkeepers on one or more GTC endorsed management courses.

The 1995 series of BIGGA Supervisory and Management Courses has been designed not only to meet the underpinning knowledge requirements of S/NVQ Level 3 Units but also to introduce elements S/NVQ Level 4. BIGGA courses are open to all greenkeepers who need to improve their supervisory and management skills. The courses are:

- Module 1: Managing People 1. October 16 – October 20. Covering team building, interpersonal skills, leadership, time management and computers in greenkeeping.
- Module 2: Managing People 2. October 30 – November 3. Covering assertive communication, influencing skills, grievance and discipline and computers in greenkeeping.
- Module 4: Managing Information. November 13 – November 17. Covering writing memos, letters and reports, communication skills, collecting and recording information.
- Module 5: Management Techniques. November 20 – November 24. Covering level 4 management techniques. Topics include maintenance and improvement of service and operation, project management, negotiation skills and quality assurance.

All course delegates and employers will receive an end of course summary. This could be used to provide evidence for N/SVQ assessors.

Attendance at each year’s course qualifies for eight credits towards the Master Greenkeeper Certificate.

The cost per week, including accommodation, all meals and tuition fees is £420+VAT for BIGGA members and £475+VAT for BIGGA non-members.

If you need advice on which week to attend or have any other queries call me on 01347 838581.

Send your application NOW.

Regional Supervisory and Management Courses

Places on the Scottish Region two-day supervisory and management course are still available. These residential courses, which will be held on October 16/17 and October 18/19, have been introduced to make management training more accessible to all BIGGA members. Each course costs £50 for BIGGA members and £150 to non-members. Reserve your place by sending a deposit of £10 to BIGGA HQ.

The Northern Region courses will be held during the week commencing February 12, in Cheshire and in Yorkshire, the Midland Region and the South Eastern Region in the week commencing February 5, three two-day courses in the South West Region in the week commencing February 19 and 1 two-day course in Killarney, Southern Ireland, in the week commencing March 4.

BIGGA Library

Books and videos have been flowing in and out of the BIGGA library at a steady rate. New titles added recently include:

- Essentials of Health and Safety at Work
- Pesticide Regulation Handbook – A Guide for Users
- Work Equipment – Guidance on Regulations
- Guide to the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and dangerous Occurrences
- Management of Health and Safety at Work
- First Aid At Work
- General COSHH ACOP, Carcinogens ACOP and Biological Agents Workplace Health Safety and Welfare
- Storage of Approved Pesticides: Guidance for Farmers and Others
- Our Health and Safety Policy: Step by Step Guide to COSHH Assessment
- Business Accounting
- Golf Course Putting Green Construction Guidelines
- Fertiliser for Turf Sand for Sports Turf Construction and Maintenance

Full library lists can be obtained from Regional Administrators or from BIGGA HQ.

Massey Ferguson Machinery Workshops

Plans are being finalised for the series of three Massey Ferguson Machinery Workshops. They will be held during March/April 1996 at Elmwood College, Oaklands College and at a location in the Midlands. The programme, covering all aspects of tractor use and maintenance, will last for four days. Each college will be asked to nominate up to two students and Massey Ferguson/BIGGA will select 12 students to attend each workshop.

The cost of training, travel and accommodation will all be met by Massey Ferguson.

The BEST piece of ADVICE I ever received

Walter Woods, Links Superintendent at St Andrews: "Hard work and learning is a great combination."
entry forms for the competitions contact Dave Wells – 01702 522202. Dennis Smith is hoping to then moving up through the young greenkeeper from our section competed in the National East Anglia section take note. Always make sure you have a national or a BIGGA handicap. A young greenkeeper from our section

Removal barriers to help potential golfers

Feet on the ground

Regarding the article on “Ditching the relics of the past – say Americans” in the July issue you asked, do you feel the title “greenkeeper” is insufficient for today’s responsibilities? To some extent this is true. But let’s not get carried away with the notion that everything in the garden is an average Pitch & Putt either. As we attract many club golfers and professionals. The site and indeed the course is small – built on only seven acres) but our investment in this development is not. Architect designed and supervised throughout construction by a reputable contractor, fully drained and with full greens irrigation all that is necessary for the family to play, but this is not your average Pitch & Putt either as we attract many club golfers and professionals.

I have just read with interest your piece “Small is beautiful” and agree entirely with the content. The article asks “So where can the young and, indeed, the old learn the game” and also quotes: “There is nowhere in this country where a beginner can feel comfortable and have all the facilities available to become handicapped golfers.”

Well now there is! When we designed a 24 bay golf driving range in 1992, we became aware of a gap in the market that was not being catered for, and we have addressed this problem with our new nine hole Academy course which opened last month. Designed specifically as a short course by Martin Hawtree of golf course architects Hawtree, and with greens constructed to USGA specifications to allow play year round, it is, we believe, the first course of its kind in Britain – not necessarily in construction terms, but in concept.

We are committed to removing the barriers in front of prospective golfers, whether young, old, male or female. What we offer is Golf for All – somewhere for all the family to play, but this is not your average Pitch & Putt either as we attract many club golfers and professionals.

The site and indeed the course is small – built on only seven acres) but our investment in this development is not. Architect designed and supervised throughout construction by a reputable contractor, fully drained and with full greens irrigation all that is missing is yardage or fairway. We have two full time greens staff looking after the course and what we lose in quantity we aim to gain in quality.

This is a new and alternative concept in golf in the United Kingdom

David Moss

Proprietor

Adlington Golf Centre

Macclesfield

Oz connections

I am working on Pinehurst No 2 course through a programme organised by Ohio University. I used to work as a demonstrator/sales rep for Andrews of Sunningdale, then Gibbs of Bedford, selling Ransomes and Kubota around the London area.

While working on the course a few weeks ago I met a group of Australian superintendents who were doing a tour of the States. John P. Odell, Superintendent of Royal Sidney GC told me that Gary Miller, who used to work at

Remove barriers to help potential golfers

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Send your letters to The Editor, Greenkeeper International, Aldwark Manor, Aldwark, Alne, York YO6 2NF or fax them on 01347 838864
It is not morbid to think about making a Will. Let us face it we none of us live forever, and unless there is a Will what we leave goes in accordance with the law under what are called the "Intestacy Rules".

Most people think that everything will automatically go to their wife or husband as the case may be. To quote the old song "It ain't necessarily so". Property in joint names will usually go to the survivor, but if the property is in just one name its value is taken into account in assessing how much goes to the surviving spouse, which in fact is limited to £125,000 plus your personal bits and pieces ("personal chattels" the law calls them) and after that some goes to children and some to relatives.

Even with a small estate is far better to have a Will, if only because you then have proof of what it is that the deceased wanted, and of course you have the deceased's choice of executors (the people who actually have to carry out the wishes), and not in accordance with arbitrary arrangements of law.

It is also important to remember that in the eyes of the law a relative is not a relative at all unless they are a blood relative. Your stepchild does not count, nor do the children of your spouse's brothers or sisters. Furthermore nowadays more and more people tend to live together without getting married and as the law stands not a surviving partner is unlikely to be able to obtain any provision even by going to Court. This may be altered soon, but is would still involve a Court case and it would be much easier just to make a Will.

**How do I make a Will?**

There is no mystique about it. All a Will has to do is to set out what it is you wish to be done with your estate. You do not have to itemise each and every item (except in so far as you wish to leave a particular item to somebody) and providing the wording is clear there need be no formality. A Will was admitted to probate which merely said "All to Mother" and this was valid. There was a slight difficulty, however, because being a Yorkshireman he called his wife "Mother" and the Court finally had to decide whether he had meant to leave everything to his Mother or Wife! The point is that even such a vague Will as that will be accepted by the Courts who will do their best to make sense of it.

Except in the case of service-men a Will has to be in writing and has to have two independent witnesses. The witnesses can be married to each other, and indeed can be anybody in the world other than people who are mentioned in the Will or their spouse. The only legal rule is that a witness cannot be blind, mad or drunk! the Will-maker and the two witnesses should all sign on the same occasion and no one should leave the room until all three signatures are complete and on the Will.

There are various companies which do publish Will forms and these, in general, are very good. Before you fill one in just stop and think what you want to do, who you want to appoint as executor, and whether there are any special ideas for your funeral. If there are, then do tell your executors. It is only in Hollywood films that they have an official "reading" of the Will and ideally the executor should open the Will to see what it says immediately on learning of the death. I recall a very sad case when a family opened the Will after the funeral to find that the first words were "I wish my body to be cremated" and they had just come back from burying her! It was very traumatic and although it ended well by having the body exhumed and then cremated it was a very gruelling experience for everybody.

I would just put in one word of caution. If there are children under 18 involved do get the Will professionally drawn. The intricacies of Trust Law are not suitable for the DIY Lawyer!

In order to deal with a dead person's estate (unless it is quite small) it is necessary to get a document called a "Grant of Representation" which is issued by a Probate Registry which is, in fact, a branch of the Courts. The way of applying for this is quite straightforward and I would invite any BIGGA member who finds himself or herself in the position of having to do this to give us a call here at Hambro Legal Protection Ltd when we will be only to happy to assist us in the process. It is rarely necessary to involve a solicitor in this part of the business, although once a Probate has been obtained it may be necessary to have a solicitor to deal with the actual conveyancing of the property.

If you do have any problems regarding Wills, intestacy or anything else of this nature please do not hesitate to telephone us. It is one of the benefits you have by virtue of your BIGGA membership.

**In the event of a member having any legal problem then it is extremely important that Hambro Legal Protection Ltd be contacted without delay. Hambro Legal Protection Ltd's telephone number is 01206 867775 and the service is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.**