Scott MacCallum looks at the recent controversial piece in The Daily Telegraph, the reaction to it and asks how best to move on from here

Many of you may have read, or perhaps heard about, the article which appeared in The Daily Telegraph, in February, which looked at the fine work being carried out at Temple Golf Club, the 1999 winner of the BIGGA Golf Environment Competition, in association with Amazone and Grass Roots.

Overall the piece was a positive look at the excellent work being done by Temple's Course Manager, Martin Gunn, and Chairman of Green, Malcolm Peake, but much of the attention the piece drew focused on the fourth paragraph which read: "Regular amateur golfers will be aware that during the last two decades course conditions throughout Britain have deteriorated alarmingly. This is particularly the case during the winter months, when the weather is at its worst."

At no stage does the writer, Colin Callander, until recently the Editor of Golf Monthly magazine, lay the blame for this supposed deterioration at the door of the greenkeeper, but it is fair to assume that the golf playing readership of the Daily Telegraph will conclude that those responsible for the condition of the golf course are also responsible for any perceived drop in quality.

Now those within the greenkeeping fraternity know that, in the main, standards have indeed risen. How else could you cope with the demands for higher stimpmeter readings and increased play? But the fact that Colin Callander, a respected and knowledgeable member of the wider golfing community, feels otherwise should be a concern to us all.

Were the comments just the result of a short memory at the end of a long wet winter or is the problem more fundamental? Knowing Colin Callander well, I worked with him at Golf Monthly, I would give him more credit than the former option and having spoken with him I know that he stands by his comments.

Therefore, should we be asking ourselves how do we get across to golf club members that course conditioning standards are indeed better now than they have ever been.

Should you be spending even more time talking with members and educating them in the job they pay you to do - the reason for aeration; why disease occurs; why the course needs to close and for what reason?

An exchange of information is important to clear up the misconceptions that can spread like wildfire and cause problems down the line.

John Ross, Course Manager at Laleham Golf Club, has already written eloquently on the matter and his letter is also printed but I'd be pleased to hear from any of you who have strong feelings on the problem, and indeed, ideas about how it can be solved.

Questions and answers