Beneath your feet...

At last I have had my first full game of golf this year: 25 May at Buckpool Golf Club, the North Section Spring outing. While my golf left a lot to be desired the weather was okay with just a couple of showers and the company was excellent. My thanks to the North Section for a grand day.

The North Section Secretary is Dougal Dougall, Head Greenkeeper at Westhill Golf Club near Aberdeen and it was great to get the news last week that the court in Aberdeen had found in his favour the case brought against him by a lady member (see story on page 12). She was struck in the eye by a ball, which ricocheted off a stone in the rough. The case has been going on for months and I hope Douglas can relax now and put it behind him. This was in my eyes a decision for common sense, the ramifications for greenkeepers everywhere if the decision had gone against Douglas could have been mind-boggling.

As always the weather is part of our everyday lives especially greenkeepers. The green staff at both Sunningdale and Wentworth must have wondered what they had done to deserve the rain that they had for the Seve Ballesteros Trophy and the Volvo PGA Championship respectively. On both occasions we could have expected both events to be foreshortened, but fantastic work by both sets of greenkeepers meant that both tournaments not only went the full distance but the courses were highly praised for their condition.

Congratulations to Brian Turner and Chris Kennedy and especially all their staff. You did a marvellous job. Contrary to what I sometimes read in papers about the condition of courses, there is no doubt in my mind that the condition of courses now is far superior to days gone by, and it's all down to the professionalism and training of green staff.

Earlier this year I was invited to speak at a Millennium Turfgrass Conference held by the AGCSA or the Australian Golf Course Superintendents Association in Melbourne and so on June 1 I headed off: "Down Under". Unfortunately it was winter-time and the weather was reminiscent of Britain in spring. However Melbourne is a lovely city with a marvellous skyline with the tallest building in the Southern Hemisphere, Rialto Towers, its crowning glory.

It is certainly a city on the up if all the new buildings and expensive shopping malls are a barometer of wealth. It also has the biggest casino I have been in (only looking, honest!) and it was packed most of the time.

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However, the reason I was there was to give a talk to all the greenkeepers' associations around the world is important and hopefully I would like to see the day when we will have exchange systems set up to allow greenkeepers to spend a few months in other countries extending their experience.

You think there are problems in your country with pests? At Anglesea Golf Club, near Geelong, they have a resident population of wild kangaroos. Now they are a lot bigger than rabbits I can assure you. When I think about courses in Canada with bears, moose, deer and geese and America with alligators and other creatures, well Britain's not such a bad place to work on a golf course after all.

Working on a golf course has its ups and downs and sometimes you are asked to do things you do not agree with, however when that happens remember this: