There are only two types of greenkeepers. Those who have gone through hard times and those who are about to go through hard times. At some point you will question your ability to cope with the pressures of high expectations under impossible conditions. An acceptance of the inevitability of unwarranted criticism and an inner belief in your own personal integrity may just help you survive.

As you read this I will be in pensive mood. I am due to attend The Open at St. Andrews in the county of my childhood, the Kingdom of Fife. Even at this late stage in my career it will be my first visit to an Open Championship and my first official visit to an Open Championship golf course. I have crossed the famous links before, as a young lad on a trip to the seaside with a football under my arm, anxious to reach the Hampden Park of St Andrews beach and play out my dreams patrolling the left wing with all the grace, elegance and footballing skills of Billy Connolly.

This return to my roots has caused me to reflect on the twists of fate, which have led me to where I am now and the lessons I have learned, more often than not, in complete contradiction to my fervent beliefs as a youth. Back then, I railed against everything which I considered to be 'establishment'. As your current Chairman, the epistle of establishment, it now comforts me to know that railing against the establishment is what the young are designed to do, it is what they do best, it is indeed their duty to do it and quite frankly I wish today's youth would do a lot more of it.

I recall as a young BGGA member being critical of the changes.

So, to return to my main theme, while the drama unfolds on the historic links, the top golfers of this world may have to forgive me if it appears at times that my thoughts are elsewhere. I may be turned back towards the beach, dreaming of the pinpoint, floated cross I just thought I had in the box when an opponent raises an arm above waist height somewhere in the same quarter of the pitch they happen to be standing in. The spectacle is devalued, the game is devalued and, sadly, our imposed acceptance of 'the beautiful game', success at any price.

Prancing prima donnas will openly forego their personal dignity by diving in the box or by collapsing in a heap when an opponent raises an arm above waist height somewhere in the same quarter of the pitch the they happen to be standing in. The spectacle is devalued, the game is devalued and, sadly, our imposed acceptance of it devalues us all.

Over the past two years, I have been lucky enough to meet and talk with Euan Grant, The Old Course Head Greenkeeper. It will be Euan's first Open as Head Greenkeeper. If you want an example of how putting one's personal integrity first breeds success, then look no further than Euan. Anyone who has met him will know what I mean. Like him, I believe that those of us who refuse to 'dive in the box' will have the real success in the end.

Kerran Daly
Chairman