This year’s late spring, has caused Course Managers/Head Greenkeepers, up and down the country and within Europe many a sleepless night. The pressure today of completing essential maintenance programmes, such as, hollow coring earlier and earlier in the year, has added to the problem. There was a time when spring renovation, meant spring but today many Course Managers/Head Greenkeepers, have to complete tasks such as hollow coring before the start of April, to fit within the ever increasing fixture list. This is ok when spring comes early!

Now on top of that, the first drought order since 1995 has been granted which means a ban on non-essential use of water. Under the six-month order, Sutton and East Surrey Water companies can ban mains water irrigation, to golf clubs, parks and sports grounds. A few sports clubs and turf growers had objected to a non-essential water ban, but their appeals were turned down.

Clubs with their own water supply, will also be effected, as the media circus moves into full swing highlighting recreational water use, side by side with the poor record water companies have in reducing leakage, not forgetting the large profits they record.

The general public will see golf courses being watered and not consider if the water is from the mains or from the clubs own water source.

Again I hear of excellent Course Managers/Head Greenkeepers, turning their backs on course management due to the stress caused by the weather, members and animals but it was still a big surprise to me, when told of a recent stew pole of 20 students studying NQO level two. Not one of those students felt that they were potential Course Managers/Head Greenkeepers. We have to ask the question, why? Is it that they see the effects of stress on their managers or the fact that promotion usually leads to moving out of their local area, an area they may have lived in all their lives. I know that this can be the case in the south west of England but our brothers and sisters with the democratic decision.

I am sure that every Course Manager/Head Greenkeeper, has at some point suffered periods of stress at work but I believe that the continued education and networking, our association can deliver, is the key to helping members over their problems.

At Burnham and Berrow, we have a major rabbit problem and we have tried most things to reduce the damage those little furry darlings cause. This year I presented a paper on Burnham & Berrow at the Canadian Conference, in Vancouver, mentioning those furry darlings and received a great joke via email from Canada, referring to afterlife, the golf course and rabbits. It certainly brightened up my day proving networking does work.

Champion of BIGGA
This month I have chosen a man whom I have known for many years, Bill Mitchell, of Perranporth Golf Club Cornwall. Billy has put more into greenkeeping and the education of trainees, than anyone I personally know and without being paid a penny. In fact, he has been out of pocket more times then I can remember, as he has purchased educational books to loan trainees to help them gain important knowledge without receiving them back after the trainee has achieved his/her goals. I am sure, if each and every trainee returned the books borrowed from Billy he would donate them to his favoured college or our library at BIGGA HOUSE. On my return to the Devon and Cornwall Section, back in the mid 80s, I met Billy for the first time and have gained a great friendship with Billy being so passionate about our Association there has been times with his views differed to others but Billy would always use the Association’s democratic procedure to voice his objections and after due process would abide with the democratic decision.

Richard Whyman
Chairman