Quick way to God-like wisdom

Often wonder if members of BIGGA think as I do, that the excellent greenkeeping education I have received over the past years has been a complete waste of time?

When I recall the vast number of years I've spent in greenkeeping, the educational lectures attended, the nights and days (including weekends) learning my craft, about grass species and how to treat and cut them, the technology of new machinery and products, applied man-management, water measurement and application, together with time spent on absorbing technical articles and journals, I am prompted to think 'what a waste of time it all was'.

Who needs education? Anyone can look after a golf course, so why are we sending our youngsters to college? Surely now is the time for us clever greenkeepers to really start using our brains.

Instead of education and college attendance, take a look at my tip for the future. My unique way means no more lectures, more time with loved ones, more time for leisure, more time for golf.

How do you do it? It's easy: Become a member of a Golf Club. Within weeks you will know all there is to know about grass, fertilisers, machinery and everything else associated with a golf course. Better still, be a talker and soon your friends will vote you into Club office. Looking for more? Okay, this is the big one. Persuade the Club officers you are the man for the job of green convener/chairman.

Believe me, you will become an expert overnight, with nothing missing from your knowledge. You will have total command of the subject, in fact you will be far more expert than the green staff and instantly capable of instructing the head greenkeeper on how the course should be managed and presented and how it can all be done on a shoe-string.

Weekends will become even better, for you will sit around the clubhouse following your round, taking well-earned praise from friends on the condition of your course. Members will buy you drinks and thank you for keeping the course open during the last tidal wave, dismissing the little matter of having to wear wellington boots. 'How could the educated green staff be so stupid as to suggest closing the course for such a little water' they will say, and you will agree, echoing the cries of 'never!' 'So what if it snows, we can always use yellow balls, can't we?'

Believe me, my finest education has come from listening to the golf club member: what he doesn't know about greenkeeping is not worth knowing. So fellow professionals, forget about training and education, we don't need it. To be an expert you need just one qualification: membership of a Golf Club.

Willie Blair, Kingsknowe Golf Club
(a greenkeeper, not a member!)
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Keeping in touch with news and comment from the regions

SURREY

The annual Scotland v England match was held at Lingfield Park GC on July 5th, the result being a three-all draw despite the Scottish Captain having only a week to muster a team. Sorry Robert, it wasn't deliberate, honest! In maintaining a drawn result the Scots retain the trophy yet again.

My thanks to both Robert Brewer for Scotland and Terry Huntley for England, for noble efforts of captaincy and to Jim Russell and his staff for preparing the course for the match. Additionally, a big thank-you to the new owners of Lingfield Park for their generosity in allowing us the use of their facilities.

The Cresta Cup was played at Ashford Manor GC on July 12th and proved to be quite a test of golf. The highest score was 37 points from M. Yorston, who was honest enough to tell us of his revised Club handicap, which was lower than his BIGGA handicap.* Second after a countback was Paul Weston with 35 points, narrowly beating Terry Edwards, also with 35. The Trade prize was won by M Luker with 38 points. The course was in great shape - thanks to Terry and his staff - and we were made most welcome by the Artisans Section. Finally our thanks to all our sponsors who are so generous throughout the year.

In mentioning Paul Weston I understand that he recently had his clubs stolen from his workshop at The Drift GC. The moral... don't be complacent and keep your clubs locked away, for it seems that thieves have a lot of nerve. On a personal note, I hope Paul's new weapons don't improve his game too much, for I have still to meet him in the Huxley Bowl!

News of forthcoming events now, with the Regional Tournament scheduled for Gog Magog GC on October 8th. Entry forms from Derek Walder on 0737 246088. These must be returned ASAP to S Silvester, 7 Park Rd, Aldershot, Hampshire. S 25 416.

The Surrey Autumn Meeting will be held at Purley Downs GC on October 18th and forms should be returned as soon as possible.

Also planned for October is a lecture at Ashford Manor Artisans Section on October 1st, the lecture being given by Ruffords Top Dress. My thanks to both Robert Brewer for Scotland and Terry Huntley for England, for noble efforts of captaincy and to Jim Russell and his staff for preparing the course for the match. Additionally, a big thank-you to the new owners of Lingfield Park for their generosity in allowing us the use of their facilities.

The section AGM will take place at Letham Grange GC on Tuesday November 26th, with forms must be returned to Iain MacLeod, 21 Hartfield Street, Tain, by November 30th at the latest.

GORDON MOIR

SOUTH WEST

The prize for the most improved course in the country has just been won by Kevin Green of Filton Golf Club. Kevin joined this Bristol Club from Wentworth some three years ago and since then an amazing transformation has taken place. In fact, give him another three years and he'll probably have a seat on the board!

Filton was the venue for our 1991 Section Championships and in spite of recent heavy rain we were treated to a dry, bright afternoon on a very fine, fair golf course. As one might expect from such a good course, there were some good scores returned, though none better than Craig Fudge, with a 69 gross that included 4 birdies and a hole in one! This was a double first for Craig, 21, from Tracy Park GC - his first win in the Assistants Championship and the first hole in one recorded in this event.

There was also one notable disaster: Laughlan 'Jock' Millar stood on the 18th tee needing a par four for a highly respectable 74 and ended up taking a ten on this tricky hole which features OB on the right and the British Aerospace hangars on the left, the roofs of which are also OB - ask 'Jock'!

The 1991 South West Section Championships:

Many thanks to Filton GC and in particular their Chairman, Ian Foulmer, for their welcome hospitality throughout the day. Thanks also to the steward for the excellent meal and finally to our sponsors who so faithfully support our tournaments: ICI, Roffey Bros., Avoncrop Amenity, Rigby Taylor, Synchemicals, Sta Brite Supplies and Daiwa UK. Thank you one and all.

We now hold stocks of BIGGA • 44

* Creditable certainly, but we would do well to remember how the greatest of all golfers, Bobby Jones, when praised for throwing the book at himself on one occasion, became indignant. 'There is only one way to conduct yourself in golf' he said. 'You might as well praise a man for not robbing a bank' - Editor.
GREENKEEPER INTERNATIONAL September 1991

AROUND THE GREEN

43 • sweaters, shirts, ties etc and if anyone would like to see before buying give me a ring — I'll do my best to arrange a fashion parade.

Please keep plugging away on the recruitment front and if you know of any greenkeepers who are not members please go and visit them. Half rates on subscriptions apply for the rest of '91, so there's never been a better time to join!

An autumn/winter lecture programme is being put together at the moment — watch this column for further details.

PAUL WORSTER

SHEFFIELD

Our annual Summer Tournament over 27 holes was played on July 17th at Hillborough GC. The trophy winners were: Best gross (27 holes) M Scothern 107 1/2. Best nett (27 holes) I Whitehead (should be off single figures) 102. Best nett (18 holes) D Chappel 68. The top four prizes went to: I Whitehead — 102. N Maltby — 105 (on back nine). M Colts — 105. M Scothern — 107 1/2.

We thank Henry Gillespie and his staff for presenting the course in excellent condition and also Hillborough GC for courtesies extended. Also to the catering staff for feeding us so well and so thoroughly. Finally, our thanks to the trade for donating to our prize table in such a generous manner. All in all a fine day enjoyed by everyone.

On now to the regional Iseki final at Keswick GC. The section congratulates B V Lax and J K Kirkham on reaching the pinnacle of greenkeeper golfing — the final at Hillside on September 12th. Good fortune to you both with a special cheer for Barry Lax, who will, I'm sure, be trying extra hard to keep an Iseki trophy in the family after son John's success last year.

Finally, on a sad note I have to report the untimely death, at the age of 46 years, of David Brown of Wath GC, who died suddenly at the end of May. David was a good friend and colleague who supported section winter lectures as well as tournaments and will be sadly missed by all who knew him.

Our deepest sympathy to his family and friends.

IAN COLLETT

NORTH EAST

July 24th saw our now traditional annual match against Club Secretaries held at Gosforth GC, courtesy of the committee, for which grateful thanks. The result was a resounding win for the greenkeepers by six to one! Our thanks especially to Jimmy Hayes and his staff for what proved to be an excellent course in greenkeeper condition.

Congratulations are again in order to 'that man' Craig Kilgour. Not only has he won the 72 hole stroke play County Championship but now adds the Durham County Match Play Championship to his formidable list of titles. This double was last achieved over 30 years ago — well done, Craig!

What more can be said about the North East qualifiers for Iseki honours at Keswick? From the field we have 4 of the 12 who go forward for major honours and just to add salt to the wound, we won the team prize as well! Now let's hope we do equally well in the final at Hillside.

JIMMY RICHARDSON

MID ANGLIA

Our Summer Tournament was played at Letchworth GC on July 17th with superb weather adding to the splendid course nicely manicured for us by Duncan and his crew.

I'm sure all those present will echo my sentiments in thanking the Club for attending to our every need and especially to the Letchworth GC Captain, who joined us for our evening of jollity and presented prizes to the following: 1st — P Raynor (Maxwell Hart Prize) 2nd — M Smith. 3rd — F Scullion. Best AM — P Robinson. Best PM — G Boulton.

Once again we were well supported by our friends in the trade, for which many thanks.

Our programme continues with a visit to Hanbury Manor GC on 8th October, beginning at 2pm. (please park at greenkeeping maintenance area).

This is followed on October 30th by 27 holes of golf at Woburn G&CC, the event being also the final of our knock-out competition. The programme will be sponsored by Lodgeway Tractors Ltd and entries may be made via Ken Bunting, telephone 044284 3359.

GEOFF SMITH

DEVON AND CORNWALL

With the start of our autumn and winter meetings only weeks away, may I remind you to return entries to me as early as possible and certainly by the closing dates, as this makes arrangements with our Club hosts a lot easier.

Hopefully by now you will have all received your diary inserts with all our sectional and national events for 1991/92 — this courtesy of sponsors, Devon Garden Machinery.

The region has put together an excellent package for the Harrogate BTME Exhibition and Seminar programme in January 1992 for a cost of only £95. If you haven't yet booked I urge you to do so now and avoid disappointment.

Finally, I look forward to meeting you all at Carlyon Bay on Wednesday October 23rd.

RICHARD WHYMAN

BUCKS, BERKS & OXON.

To those members of B&B&O who have just collapsed at the sight of this epistle in Greenkeeper International, I apologise… whilst reminding you all that I'm not worth much so it's not worth trying to sue me!

While on the subject, there are probably many rumours and/or theories as to the reasons for the lack of B&B&O reports in the magazine, so I will take this opportunity to put the record straight.

First, it was felt that with the inception of our own newsletter the need for national reports would be less, especially as these tended to be submitted late and were — in effect — little more than out of date golf results. Due to communication problems, what few reports that might have become became none, so after a minor re-shuffle within the committee I've somehow managed to land the 'plum' job of communicating to all of you out there in greenkeeper-land.

My first aim is to write reams of boring rubbish so that you will never feel the need to read anything pertinent to your section again.

Unfortunately, this could be seen as self indulgence.

As usual, we have a rich and varied calendar of events planned — yes, you've guessed it, golf, golf and more golf! This starts with our matches against other sections, as well as the real 'crunch' match against Club secretaries within the section. These are all always highly entertaining, so don't just sit there thinking about it, get involved by ringing our Captain, Dave Childs, on 0296 624068 and see your name is forward. On that point, if there are other BICGA sections that fancy a thrashing at golf, give Dave a call and we'll try to organise a raiding party.

On the horizon is our Autumn Invitation at Sonning GC on October 16th and a later date — November 5th — for our day at The Berkshire. These are both sure to be over-subscribed so enter early and look for details in your newsletter.

Our Summer Fourball Competition for the Rigby Taylor Trophy is well under way now, with a few notable early victors in Heads and Porter from Frilford Heath and Childs and Goodchild from Ellesborough, together with dark horses Collis and Reeve from Sonning. All will unfold as the season progresses, climaxing with the final at Frilford Heath in November, a great RigbyTaylor day. Our thanks to Roger Bowles for his hard work in making the event possible and if last year is a yard-stick, it will be another great day.

A reminder that our 1992 Gentleman's Dinner will be at Frilford Heath in February, cost about £20, with D.J.s or lounge suits the dress order of the day. Interested? send a £5 deposit/reservation to Bob Woodward, 19 The Green, Burnham, Bucks. SL1 7BG.

That just about wraps up my first G.L report, but if anyone has any comments they would like me to ignore — sorry, consider — please do not hesitate to contact me. The name is Ray and the number is 0628 34095.

RAY CLARK

KENT

It is rather sad that our Summer Tournament, scheduled for play at North Foreland on July 17th, was cancelled.

It would perhaps be simple to say that its demise was due to lack of interest, although we may have more detail at a later date. Though that particular meeting was cancelled, you may rest assured that the Autumn Tournament at Knowle Park will positively go ahead.

For those who feel the need for summer golf, why not contact your fellow greenkeepers at other courses and arrange a visit combined with a spot of competition? From past experience, if approached in a correct and proper manner, most Clubs are very hospitable to greenkeepers. Always remember to take your BIGGA membership card with you and remem-
ber to behave in a manner that reveals an ambassador for greenkeeping and the Association.

May I welcome Neil Turner, the new head greenkeeper at Bexleyheath following two years at Effingham, into our section and wish him well in his new post. If you haven’t yet met him, you may detect a wee hint of the Scottish burr.

Without too much to report this month, may I say how pleased I was to read David White’s editorial comment in our defence in the July issue, which concerned an article appearing in another trade journal by a supposedly expert agricultural agronomist who played golf to a handicap of 8 and played four times a week. Like David, I also read this article and whilst I’m normally a calm and good natured sort of chap, I can tell you that this piece threw me into a blinding rage. In essence, this ‘expert’ trashed the British greenkeeper as some sort of ignorant rabble; laying the blame for all the problems of condition and presentation of courses in this country only at our door! He paid little attention to the real problem – the average Club management structure and the appalling attitudes found within the game. Thankfully, the golfing bodies are addressing this problem and I can only hope that they have the teeth to actually bite!

To the ‘expert’, I would suggest that every greenkeeper wants to present his course in peak order 365 days a year, barring remedial work or atrocious weather, but in the majority of cases is prevented from doing so by financial restraints that cut back on manpower, training, machinery and material needs.

Personally, I am not prepared to carry the can for these deficiencies, especially when we expend so much time and energy at our own courses just fighting for changes that will improve our budgets (and their courses)!

Perhaps, as in other areas of business, our ‘expert’ should take a look higher up the golf club management ladder... and then go back to advising farmers!

PAUL COPSEY

EAST OF ENGLAND

For our July outing 20 members boarded a ‘charabanc’ (you think I jest) for a visit to the ‘Pencross sward’ of Collingtree Park.

A warm welcome was extended on our arrival by host, Peter Jones, and refreshments were well received by those who had missed lunch.

Peter showed us around the Pro’s shop with all its television and video equipment installed to ‘sort out’ a player’s swing. This was followed by a slide show giving us an insight into Peter’s previous greenkeeping experience, then slides of the construction of the course at Collingtree Park. Many of us would, I feel, benefit by taking photographs of work in progress at our own courses.

Next, an outside demonstration of the Toro Hydroject 3000, conveniently delayed from the planned morning demo by the inch or more rain which fell in Northampton over the previous night. This proved an interesting extra for our group and was followed by a golf buggie tour around the course, with Peter showing us both his successes and his troubles. Our route ended at the workshop area, where it is always fascinating to see the machinery used by others. As you might imagine, many questions were fired at Peter and Phil, his right-hand man.

BOB DENNIS

EAST ANGLIA

Our travelling band gathered at Royal Cromer on a damp day in June. ‘An improvement already’, I hear you cry, for this was only rain and our last was a monsoon!

I must say that everyone at Royal Cromer made us extremely welcome with Roger and his men preparing the course to an excellent standard. There was wine on the table – courtesy of the Club – and a liqueur from the president. The Club captain said it was a pleasure for them to entertain us, for which we thank you sir, recognition at last.

Needless to say, the locals ‘cleaned up’ in the golf with even their steward playing yet still finding time to prepare the grub. Good lad!

Someone remembered to bring back the Kings Shield, so we thought we’d play for it and the results are as follows: 0-18: 1st Dave Wilkinson 36. 2nd Michael Fance 35. 3rd H G Wells 35. 19-28: 1st Steve Pigott 39. 2nd Tony Tyrell 38. 3rd Mike Kenyon 26. Guest results: 1st Dave Sego 41. 2nd G Smith 41.

Someone was taking orders for tee shirts with a suitable lowering of tone, for – honestly – the caption was “greenkeepers like a bit of rough!” Anyone want one? shh... see me. Steve Piggots wore one but it was his birthday and we all sang for him.

On a serious note, Ernie Hart was missing from Cromer, his wife having sadly passed away. Our sympathies are with you at this time, Ernie, and we hope we shall see you at our gatherings again ere too long.

We took an unprecedented step by giving Toddy a stroke back for age... poor devil couldn’t climb up one of the tees and we mustn’t be too heartless. Prizes were donated by Rigby Taylor, CMW, Ransomes, Colliers, DOE, Pattissons, Chris Toolbrook and Ocock. Thank you sincerely, especially Royal Cromer, it was our pleasure and privilege.

Some dates for ‘92 – yes 1992 – are Woodbridge in June, Colchester in August and Eaton in October (might have some greens by then, might I add). Trying to get Bungay for April but have yet to phone Mick to pave the way.

Nice to have a cheer for one of ours at The Open. Who? Robin Mann of course. Robin is son of Wally Mann, head greenkeeper at Rushmere, who is currently waiting to have a hip operation. Hope all goes well for Wally and well done Robin, keep up the good work.

MICK LATHROPE

SOUTH EAST REGION

A regional golf tournament will be held at Gog Magog GC, Cambridge, on Tuesday October 8th. Entry is £16 (pay on the day) and entrants should send name, membership number and handicap to: Sam Sylvester, 7 Park Lane, Aldeburgh, Suffolk IP15 5HL.

MICHAEL PETERS

NORTHERN

As summer passes quickly by we are almost at the end of our golf fixtures, though there are still some places left for the Autumn Tournament at Garforth.

Your committee are endeavouring to locate the whereabouts of a trophy presented to the section by Jeff Mason, formerly of Scarcroft. Can anyone shed light on the location of this silver salver? Please call me if you have any information.

I am sure you will be saddened to hear that long standing Northerner, Mick Hegarty of Leeds GC, has suffered a heart attack. The best wishes of all section members go to Mick in the hopes of a speedy recovery.

BOB LUPTON

EAST SCOTLAND

Dunbar GC was the setting for the first committee game, playing for the ‘Eddie Holt Memorial Trophy’, donated by Eddie’s daughter Rosemary. Eddie, who passed away suddenly in April ‘89, was on the East Scotland committee for many years and thus it seemed fitting that this trophy remain within the committee. Our grateful thanks will always go to Rosemary and her family for such a kind gesture.

Once decided on date and venue, our search widened for a sponsor. Word was put round and in stepped our faithful friends, Frew & Co. of Edinburgh. It was they who provided transport, lunch, tea and ‘light refreshments’, with Colin McGeorge and Kenny Hunter designated ‘teetotal’ drivers, as well as...
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