to my credentials I am able to argue with complete authority that my version of a golf green in Utopia was correct while his was entirely erroneous.

Unfortunately though, and in common with many golfers, he was not offering an opinion on the greens but making what he considered to be a statement of fact. Based on the dual principal that he could occasionally hit a golf ball in the rough vicinity of the target and that he was playing a golf course acknowledged to be of exceptional quality he concluded that he was fully qualified to make such a statement. To him the greens in question were of a quality that was highly desirable and he wanted to know when my greens would be of a comparable standard. I however took the stance of the art critic talking to the philistine and was able to point out the gross error of his ways. The greens I suggested, far from being admirable, were in fact artificial, horrifically bumpy, diseased and unplayable for most of the winter, inordinately expensive to maintain, environmentally unsound and teetering on total demise whenever hotter than average weather was encountered. I also pointed out that their softness would negate all strategic elements painstakingly designed into the golf course. After all, there is no point in having a shrewdly placed greenside bunker if the green has all the characteristics of a green blancmange. Anyone can lob a mid iron over the offending object from heavy rough and still get it to stop within a couple of feet so what is the point in having the bunker there in the first place. It ceases to have any influence on how to play the preceding shot.

You might as well have that deranged individual from "Home Front in the Garden" design the course for all the subtlety you would need with greens like that. I ask you, would Tiger Woods with his supreme golfing brain have so dominated our Open Championship at St Andrews if Eddie Adams' greens had the receptive qualities of a plum duff? Well yes, he probably would have, but you get my point don't you?

However, to be fair, I do believe that most golfers do appreciate true quality when they finally encounter it. Just recently a popular golf magazine ran a piece on courses that they considered were in possession of the finest greens in the country. Listed were several leading courses and I am delighted to report that all of them were maintained in that traditional British way that produces a golf green we, the greenkeeper, so admire. Yes, all of the courses mentioned had greens that were firm, true, fast and consistent whatever the time of year and surprise, surprise not a USGA spec among them. But we don't want to dig that old chestnut up again, do we?

So I say to all my fellow greenkeepers out there, if you are getting some serious abuse of the acoustic nerve then remember, you are the expert and they the layman. You are the respected art critic, they the student. You are the connoisseur while they are the apprentice. So argue your case from the position of complete authority that your knowledge bestows upon you ... in the nicest possible way of course.

Sandy McDivot, Head Greenkeeper, Studgecombe Pay and Play
One little aside at the forum was when, at a break, I was asked what BIGGA stood for. This was from a senior representative of a national body. I knew what their Association was all about why didn't they know us. This brought home to me how insular we have been and also how much work we still have to do at BIGGA to be recognised on a par with them. However, that aside, this was a positive and interesting two days, bringing together of views on how to expand and develop golf into the new century and I congratulate the Scottish Golf Union for this and I look forward to BIGGA being involved in future meetings. It was annoying reading Tracey’s report in the August issue about the abuse of membership cards for courtesy golf. I know it's a very small minority, but there are always some rotten eggs in the basket who are only looking to take advantage purely for selfish reasons. So don't hold back if you know of any abuse of our card, report them it could be you who can't get a game at a club because they have refused courtesy to greenkeepers.

I have just returned from Saltex where we were lucky with the weather. One heavy shower on Wednesday was the only glitch in the show. I was asked to bell through its Scandal judges on the Tuesday morning and what a hard job that is. I'm glad I had someone else with me to bounce our thoughts off each other. However, we survived with no threats and no bribes... well I don’t think anyone gave coffee count as bribes. One thing for sure our staff were kept busy. Tracey had numerous enquires and questions about membership, with quite a lot of ongoing work and the sales and marketing team must have had sone feet after all their work, as they made contact with customers, sponsors and advertisers old and new. I spent three hours solid going round the stand. Steve Hardy talking to many companies. Tell you what, give me a job on the course as professional as possible.

By the time this is published most of us will probably have finished our autumn renovation work or at least be well on our way doing turf cutting, micro coring, verti draining, top dressing, overseeding – we will all be doing all or some of these tasks. Hopefully we will have had some reasonable weather to get them done and with the temperatures we will go into the winter season in good health.

This is how I see it now, no longer can we talk about “The Playing Season”, meaning April to September. The demands on the play of these courses is just too much to my mind we have two seasons - Summer and Winter - and we have to prepare for both. It has been interesting recently to talk to more and more who have been able to hold or incur costs in August. Usually during a quiet two weeks when their members are on holiday, they have raved about their greens recovery rate, and are now going into the winter season in fine condition.

This is something we should all consider and start working towards. I know, your club will never wear it well. I can assure you that is what these other clubs said, "if you don't ask, you won't get". Find out if someone near you has done it, and use them as an example and make your request as professional as possible.

All you need to do is convince your green committee, not the whole club. If they won’t go for it as a whole, ask to try nine greens or three or six or even one (always start high) next year. Once they have seen the recovery rate as compared with late September or October and the ensuing benefits they will be convinced for the next year.

Finally I would like to extend a warm welcome to Mercedes Porter who has joined the Sales and Marketing team in place of Jenny and also to Brad Anderson, who is taking Janine’s place as Receptionist/Trainee Clerical Assistant. I wish they both will enjoy their time with us.

In the July issue I did not finish with a quote. I’d like to thank those people who asked me why as it made me realise that someone does read this article. This month I have to thank one of my assistants, Mark Gardner, for the following:

Don’t bask in yesterday’s glory

As I see it... As I see it... As I see it...
"I WISH WE HAD..."

"...a set of THATCH-AWAY verticutters. I've never seen anything work like they did, when we had them on demonstration!"

"Next, I'd get an EASY-LOAD trailer. It would save hours of back ache when we're top dressing..."

"...and the GREENS GROOMER is incredible for rubbing it in. We had one of those on demo too."

"Then the TRUE-SURFACE vibratory rollers are ideal for finishing off after aerating and top dressing. They keep the greens true through the winter as well."

"plus, if we had a MAXI-BRUSH, its' 18' width would quickly brush the fairways, then we could fold it down to 6' to do the greens. Better book a demo of this one quick!"

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