

GREENSIDE COMMENT

Last month we commented on the lack of discussion, the R & A's document - The Way Forward has received among the intended recipients, the Club Committees.

Nothing has changed that view, in fact it has been confirmed by officials of the English Golf Union.

However, it is pleasing to report that the EGU themselves have taken very positive action and this has resulted in a number of seminars around the country aimed specifically at Chairman of Green Committees.

The response has been overwhelming, so much so that over a hundred club members representing their course committees, met at the Askham Bryan College near York to listen to presentations by officials from the STRI, the Greenkeepers Association, turf grass educationalists and the Secretary of the EGU, Keith Wright.

When one considers most of these men, (there was not a Lady Green Chairman in sight) had taken a day off from their business activities, no doubt at considerable expense, it emphasised the degree of enthusiasm that these often maligned club officials, put into their appointment.

Not only had they come to listen to the expertise of the speakers, most had pertinent questions to put, which if nothing else, demonstrated a more than intelligent grasp of the responsibility of course management and a desperate need to understand more about the techniques of turf maintenance.

EGU official, Peter Wilson, who chaired the conference, was hard pressed to find sufficient time for the question sessions and although it must be said he failed to satisfy all among a waving sea of hands, it was a brave attempt to spread the debate through the clubs from Cleveland to the Nottinghamshire borders.

A subject, recently aired in the national press, Greenkeeper Training, received

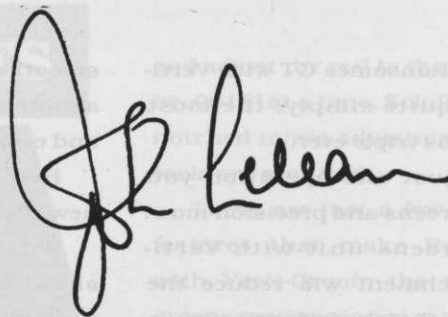
a very sympathetic response. Controversy spreads like wildfire and few in the golf course profession will not have had their attention drawn to a letter published in the Sunday Telegraph, from a Ken Rumsey, signing in as president of Darlington Golf Club.

Mr Rumsey takes grave exception to an article by Michael Williams supporting greenkeeper training and suggests in jaundiced terms, greenkeepers do not need university degrees to become highly-qualified tractor drivers. He goes on to say that his club have paid to send their greenstaff on courses in the past, but the main result is that they regard themselves as 'qualified experts'.

There is some satisfaction that Darlington Golf Club have since stated that Mr Rumsey was representing his own convictions and not that of the club, but nevertheless it is sad that a man with such bigoted views is in a position to scuttle the personal development opportunities of the club employees.

A point perhaps for future comment was a suggestion from the Secretary of Ganton Golf Club that clubs had previously followed the recommendations of the Agricultural Wages Board. These have been superseded by the wage scales published by the greenkeepers themselves, though they had no backing from either the EGU, the R & A or any other organisation in golf.

He proposed that discussions between the various bodies might consider these scales, a suggestion overwhelmingly approved and agreed by the EGU.



EDITOR