

GOLF GREENKEEPING

and Course Maintenance

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British Golf Greenkeepers'
Association

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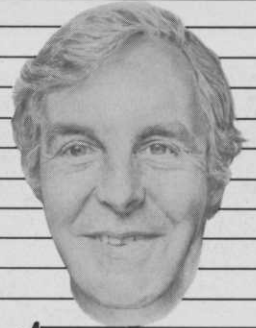
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Greenside Comment...



John Lelean

THE SEARCH BEGINS

Some years ago there was a popular monologue emanating from across the Atlantic attempting to define 'What is a boy', with a sequel asking the same question for the opposite sex. It went something like this. 'A boy is tousled haired with short pants and dirty knees. He likes getting into scrapes, ice cream, kicking a ball, throwing stones and stamping into puddles. He dislikes, girls, washing his neck, going to bed, school dinners and doing as he is told.

The first task of the BIGGA Committee is to appoint an Administrator for the Association, but before that can be done a similar specification must be produced for the person who will ultimately be appointed to take on this most exacting role.

Unlike other appointments to head and represent an Association the applicants for this job needs to have very special qualities. The greenkeeping profession has a long and distinctive role in the game even before Old Tom Morris which has often, and not without foundation, been described as more akin to a disease or a religion. Those who play and those who produce the fields for combat are invariably totally dedicated in their efforts to seek the ultimate in perfection. Few succeed, but this is never regarded as a deterrent. There is always tomorrow, when improved skills, additional determination and a little slice of luck will produce the results that evaded them today.

First and foremost the General Administrator must have a total understanding of the work of the greenkeeper. The long hours spent, often in adverse weather conditions, tending over one hundred acres of turf. To many laymen one blade of grass is, much the same as another, but the greenkeeper knows far better. Only he can distinguish the desirable species and the best method of cultivation.

To lead the greenkeepers to full recognition, the Administrator must also be aware of their working conditions, present educational facilities, and more important, the lack of them, and often, the total incomprehension by some Club Committees, to understand the greenkeeper is a professional. To maintain their golf course, he should be given the authority, facilities, status and salary to carry out his duties to the best of his abilities. The Administrator will need to have the diplomacy of a Foreign Secretary, the political awareness of a Prime Minister, the drive of a Captain of Industry, the meekness of a Mother Superior and the stamina of a Royal Marine Commando.

An ideal job, perhaps, for Prince Edward, if only he played golf.

Whoever receives the accolade of recognition from this appointment he is certain to be taking on a job where there will be more brick-bats than bouquets, more criticism than praise and appreciation more likely to come after his demise than during his tenure of office.

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