

show them that most of the established professions only emerged over long periods and the early pioneers saw little of the benefits. But at least it is a progressive view with a worthwhile long-term aim.

The same cannot be said of those who seem to want to retire into their fortress and pull up the drawbridge. There are some who want, in effect, an association composed solely of established head greenkeepers, which will preserve the status quo forever. This is a recipe for censorship of greenkeeping journals, the imposition on employers of a salary scale they have not negotiated, a firm policy of no consultant agronomists, head greenkeepers dictating policy to the clubs, which, in turn, will have to put up with whatever conditions they choose to give. I believe the majority of greenkeepers have more sense and are more realistic.

I have put down a few ideas, having tried to face the problems head on. So, don't switch off or turn the page because you don't like them all—try to thrash out something better with your colleagues!

Of course, the first task is to educate golfers about golf courses and I think that has begun. If it means saying what they have now is poor, do not flinch from it, but point out that it is almost always the result of unwise pressure on staff.

Let us first deal with the vexed question of who sets policy. I believe that this is not the job of either greenkeeper or green committee—rather, that both should make big contributions towards gathering the facts required before making these decisions. Policies will only stick if all members have at least a say in making them. Anything decided by a committee or individual can be overturned by successors within months.

By all means let everyone make their points, perhaps engage an

agronomist to prepare a report or address the members. But then put them in a general meeting to decide a policy and stick to it for a long period. They will have to decide which type of golf—target or traditional and the costs and consequences of each.

Architecture must go hand-in-hand with this, so changes in bunkering, etc, all come into the reckoning. If all this can be done properly, resulting in a policy document, the greenkeeper should then be protected from much of the pressure from which he suffers at present. What a relief!

The reality is that only the owner, be it club or company, can decide policy. They can, and should, take advice, both from their greenkeeper and their consultant, but they cannot be allowed to duck the responsibility of actually doing the deciding.

Denigrate

I do not denigrate either greenkeeper or green committee by saying they should not take on this role themselves.

Having got rid of that bogey, let us proceed to consider a structure to cover the whole field of golf greenkeeping.

If we are to claim this is a skilled business, it follows that there is no place for unskilled operatives, which is only another name for cheap labour. The set-up of a highly paid head greenkeeper with a bunch of unskilled and untrained young men should become a thing of the past. Most clubs had a full, fairly skilled workforce up until the last 25 years. The need to attract head greenkeepers with a reasonable salary led to clubs recruiting young men from the bottom of the labour market and then keeping them, without training, on very low wages.

Trainees should be of high quality, carefully selected and then trained fully. The City and Guilds course was not too bad for this purpose when

properly taught by the colleges. It perhaps did not give sufficient emphasis on fundamental science subjects, tended to be repetitious, not always relevant and too spread out.

Within a year, at most, the trainee should be moving into the craftsman grade followed by further grades of skilled craftsman. Remuneration could be geared to these grades.

My impression is that there is not too much need for additional training in practical greenkeeping. Learning the job from senior colleagues is still a very good method. The trade will find it in their own interests to provide some lectures and especially training in machinery workshops.

The main difficulty now at craftsmen level is that, at different clubs, working practices have evolved in different ways and at different standards. We need some standardisation and upgrading to fit in with modern policies.

Now, all the time we have to be thinking (as do other crafts and professions) along two parallel lines. We may be able to make suggestions for future college-based training for craftsmen, but it would be grossly unfair to present staff to fail to produce a scheme that will help them. At craftsman level, my own experience of this standardisation and upgrading is that it is not really so difficult to do.

I believe the greenkeepers' associations could form a board, perhaps with some outside help, to agree working practices and appoint some regional advisors.

Big Brother? Not really. In my profession, I know that any piece of work I carry out can be inspected at random. The fact that greenkeepers themselves would be seeking to enforce high standards and, therefore, protect their clients is a concept common to most professions.

Now we come to the real crunch. It

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Marshall Concessionaires' Qualifying Tournament

The Marshall Concessionaires' qualifying tournament for SIGGA members was held at Cawder Golf Course, Bishopbriggs, near Glasgow in June. Fifty took part and the six who qualified to go forward to the finals in England later this year are Jim Grainger (Largs GC), Steven Hogg (Cawder GC), Alan Clark (Ballochmyle GC), Alan Purdie (Broomieknowe GC), Ian McLeod (Tain GC) and Ian Galbraith (Hilton Park GC).

SIGGA would like to thank Malcolm Clark, managing director of Autogarden (Glasgow), for providing all the hospitality for players and officials and also for donating six beautiful prizes. Alistair Connell, course manager at Cawder, presented an excellent golf course. We wish all the qualifiers every success.

Joe McKean.

Jimmy Kidd has been appointed estates manager of Gleneagles Hotels. Jimmy joined Gleneagles in March 1983. In his new position, he will be responsible directly to the general manager Peter Lederer for all aspects of golf-course maintenance, gardens, landscaping, and all projects related to the 610 acres of Gleneagles Hotel. Jimmy can be contacted on 07646 2231 (ext 4364) or 07646 2879 (home).

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WEST HERTS GOLF CLUB

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Tel: (0442) 60161 ext 2512. Closing date 24.9.84.

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Dacorum District Council

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Address to:

**The Secretary,
St. Georges Hill Golf Club,
St. George's Hill,
Weybridge,
Surrey KT13 0NL**

ST. ENODOC GOLF CLUB

require a

HEAD GREENKEEPER

Applicants must possess a sound knowledge of up-to-date turf management techniques preferably with links course experience. Thorough knowledge of the use of maintenance machinery and the ability to direct and motivate staff.

Salary negotiable.

Applications in writing giving full details of previous experience and names of referees to:

**The Secretary,
ST. ENODOC GOLF CLUB,
Rock,
Nr. Wadebridge,
Cornwall. PL27 6LB**

HEAD GREENKEEPER

required by

GORLESTON GOLF CLUB LIMITED

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Salary negotiable.

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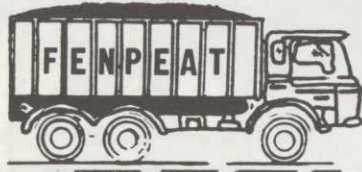
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