

Letters

■ I was disgusted to read in the June Surrey Section notes in *Around the Green* that certain people had been found to have 'lent' their BIGGA membership cards to friends in order that they may obtain a free round of golf.

In my opinion, as public flogging is no longer within the law, those involved should be properly exposed and have all privileges withdrawn forthwith.

Comment, please.

ROGER GLAZIER Cuddington Golf Club

At a time when greenkeepers are making such great strides in presenting a professional image I find such behaviour beyond comprehension. The act is not just irresponsible, it is tantamount to criminal theft. Personally I'm all in favour of a good flogging! – editor.

■ May I respond to Jim Arthur's article 'When Will They Learn', which I found entertaining. However, the facts are misconstrued.

Grass needs a balanced diet of nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium, as well as micro nutrients. There are a lot of phosphorus and potassium deficient courses all over the world and as phosphorus can be available or unavailable, why not take the guesswork out and recommend soil testing?

Pennecross was not bred to replace Bermuda grass in warm areas of the USA. It was bred to out compete *Poa annua* in cool northern climes, as a cool season grass. Because of its superior putting quality it has been pushed further and further south to replace Rye and/or Bermuda grass greens. Management techniques in the south are quite different to those in the north. It is a cool season grass, very aggressive in growth habit. If not managed properly it will thatch and spike up; however, if managed properly it produces a very good putting surface.

The principle behind USGA Spec. greens is improved drainage and reduced compaction – the biggest problem all over the world. Common sense tells me that USGA Spec or other greens which drain well and do not compact would be most desirable in the UK climate, which is cool and moist. A plant needs a certain amount of water to live. Because evapotranspiration rates are extremely high in the desert, water requirements are high. In Britain, evapotranspiration rates are low, thus water requirements are low. The need to get rid of water quickly (by drainage) is much more critical in the UK than in most other climates in the world.

We would welcome visits to East Sussex National by Mr Arthur or any other research organisation to run experiments and tests. In this business we can only go forward with continued research and experiments.

KEN SIEMS East Sussex National GC

■ I enclose a pamphlet that I produced for our Club members which may be of interest to BIGGA members.

The idea arose following a conversation with some of our lady members who genuinely believed that we "just cut grass".

I am pleased to report that the pamphlet has met with favourable comment, though we shall have to wait and see what effect it has in practice.

ED ROWSON Welwyn Garden City GC

The pamphlet, entitled 'They only cut the grass, don't they...?' is a little too long to reproduce here, but it outlines the complete role of the greenkeeper in golf course management. A bright and innovative idea, copies may be obtained by sending an SAE to BIGGA HQ at Aldwark Manor.

■ Your contributor, Cedric Johns, on the question of impounding winter water for summer irrigation omits two important points.

If holding lakes are constructed on a permeable subsoil, they have to be lined or puddled – no easy or inexpensive task. If such lakes are used as a water source – and the level is lowered – the puddling cracks when exposed to the air and the lakes cannot be brought up to their previous level. Furthermore, nothing looks worse than a dry 'water feature' – a muddy weed-infested wilderness. Holding lakes must not double as water features, but be kept out of sight.

The second point is that if reservoirs (ie. lined or puddled holding ponds) are built with the bulk of the excavation below the water table, when extraction lowers the water level inside to below that of the water table outside, the liner; plastic construction or even puddling will be blown out of the ground by ground water pressure – or at least ruptured and leak.

Construction of dams across valleys to impound water is not

COMPETITION RESULTS

Short of actually visiting Chateau des Vigiers Golf and Country Club in the south of France, designed by Donald Steel and built by our 'First of the Summer Wine' competition sponsors, Brian D Pierson (Contractors) Ltd, the next best thing is to enjoy some of their tempting wines. Results of the competition are now available and reveal the following three members as lucky winners of a case of wine bearing the distinctive Chateau des Vigiers label: Terry Tench from Northwich, Cheshire, Angus Gray from Stanton in the Wolds, Nottingham, and Richard Whyman from Bude, in Cornwall.

These three, selected at random from the competition postbag, will shortly be receiving their prizes for correctly completing the answers, which were:

1: Pete Dye, 2: 'The Way Forward' and 'The Demand for Golf', 3: Derek Ganning, The Belfry, 4: The Royal and Ancient Golf Club, The United States Golf Association, The English Golf Union, Federation Française de Golf (French Golf Federation), British Association of Golf Course Constructors, 5: Muirfield.

something to entrust to the local earth mover. It is all very well putting an obstruction across a small valley provided adequate spill ways are designed and constructed, but dams to hold back several million gallons need wing walls cut deep back into the valley side, and without fail-safe spillways etc. the whole lot can easily end up downstream, which can be a costly exercise in compensation.

JIM ARTHUR Budleigh Salterton, Devon

■ I write to thank the BIGGA HQ staff for their help in the 'Placement Referral Scheme', especially Debbie Savage, who was extremely helpful in relaying messages between me and my new employers. She played a vital role in my achieving my new position.

I would also like to thank Scarborough South GC for sending me to Askham Bryan College, which enabled me to become qualified, and to head greenkeeper, Colin Robinson, for passing on his knowledge to me at every opportunity.

D ROWE Golf Club Herford, West Germany

■ I was intrigued at the introduction into the UK of the Toro HydroJect 3000 ('Shot in the Dark' – June issue) and greatly admire the design of this beautifully engineered product.

I am among the first to applaud new thinking in the field of surface and sub-surface cultivation without disruption... but the article, written not unexpectedly with an American slant, compares water injection only with core-aeration and implies that this is the only conventional method of aeration.

Of course, in the USA, regular slit-tining for sub-surface cultivation does not feature in many maintenance programmes, whereas in the UK greenkeepers have for years slit-tined on a regular basis to fulfil most of the needs described. Many would refute, on this side of the Atlantic anyway, that coring is the only conventional method of aeration.

'Compaction pans' due to repeated cultivation to a uniform depth are a phenomenon more prevalent in the USA. British greenkeepers, with solid support and recommendations from consultants such as Jim Arthur, have for many years been regularly slitting at four, six, eight inches and deeper, with such as the Hydromain, to avoid such a pan developing.

The long, uncompacted hole produced by such tines have side walls of a considerable area to absorb air and moisture, promote gaseous exchange and encourage deeper root growth, all contributing to a healthier sward.

I wonder why the research in Michigan compared work on plots which had only received hollow-tine or non-cultivation? Surely on such areas any type of deep penetration would provide conclusive improvement.

Interesting also that soil strength measurements showed water injection treatment effective to a depth of four inches against hollow-tining at only two inches! When necessary we are consistently coring to four or five inches, with measurable cores on the surface to prove it. It must be difficult (or at least time consuming) to truly assess the regular penetration depth of a jet of water into a surface where degrees of compaction are variable.

I may well be accused of bias, perhaps justifiably, but it seems to me the title 'Shot in the Dark' is apt. Perhaps we need a little more light on the subject.

ARTHUR HARRISON SISIS Equipment (Macclesfield) Ltd

To David Golding, Education Officer

■ I have recently been accepted for a Greenkeeping Management course at Oaklands College and seek your help in gaining practical experience whilst progressing toward my qualifications.

I live on the Herts/Beds borders and wish to enter the greenkeeping profession. I find that without practical greenkeeping experience my college progress is hampered. Can any Club use a willing and eager extra hand?

DAVID DAY 70 Woodside Rd, Lower Woodside, Caddington, Beds LU1 4DQ