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**'The MGC... should be the aim
of every golf course manager
or head greenkeeper'**

7 ➤ For those who remain undecided about registering for the certification programme, let me remind you of one simple fact. Considerably more money is now being invested in maintaining today's courses and just as these sums increase significantly each year, so also does Club management seek assurance that the man entrusted to take charge knows exactly what he is doing. The knowledge gained through years of practical experience is both invaluable and essential, no one would disagree. Equally important however, and rightly so, is the need for technical skills and those of a manager. The MGC provides proper recognition for these facets of total management and achieving this qualification should be the aim of every golf course manager or head greenkeeper.

■ *Laurence Pithie, Britain's first Master Greenkeeper, is 38 and lives in Tetbury with his wife Sandra and their two children, aged six and 10. He first entered greenkeeping in 1970, beginning as an apprentice at Bruntsfield Links, Edinburgh, whilst studying at Elmwood College, before moving to Moretonhall, also in Edinburgh and thence to Sandiway in Cheshire as head greenkeeper. Five years later he became Course Manager, Minchinhampton Golf Club, a position he has held for some ten years.*

On three occasions Laurence has visited the USA as National Greenkeeper and Groundsman of The Year, presenting papers on turfgrass management to an international audience in Houston, Texas. When not at Minchinhampton he can often be found photographing other golf courses and now possesses a large collection of slides, books and other literature relating to golf course management. Not surprisingly, his 'other' interests are sporting and include both golf and badminton.

The Joint Golf Course Committee

'Great cause' continues

After the announcement in the June issue of Greenkeeper International that the R&A had created The Joint Golf Course Committee, a decision to broaden the horizon for greenkeeper education has been taken. The appointment of Bob McLaren as Chairman of the JGCC Greenkeeper Training and Recruitment Panel will come as no surprise to those who have been following the fortunes of "The Way Forward."

Bob's volunteer support of golf has been highly visible for many years and significantly his professional career was in the field of education. After a number of years in the Glasgow Education System, McLaren became head teacher at Quarriers School for Special Education near Largs, where he now lives. Before retirement, Bob was active in the game as Ayrshire delegate to the Scottish Golf Union, which led to him being elected President in 1989.

As a member, now Chairman, of the Greenkeeper Training Committee from 1984 and a member of the four man R&A committee commissioned to further the cause of "The Way Forward", this first chairman of a Joint Golf Course Committee Panel stated quite simply, "I expect the next few years to be of great benefit to Golf Clubs and golfers". Of course, that is exactly what Bob McLaren has been doing for a long time past; so why should we expect less now?

Readers of Greenkeeper International are first to know the Terms of Reference for the JGCC. Here are extracts of consequence for greenkeepers.

- 'To recommend standards of golf course construction and maintenance.
- To work with National Golf Unions and other organisations for the improvement of education and professional standards for greenkeepers.
- To promote golf-related turf research.
- To ensure availability of effective agronomic and technical advice.
- To encourage more effective committee structures and the formation of long term management plans within Clubs.
- To raise funds for the furtherance of stated objectives'.

If anyone can give reasons why these objectives are not in the best interests of golf, let him or her speak out in the next issue of Greenkeeper International. More to the point, the writer would love to hear from anyone with bright ideas towards dealing with the last of these Terms. Golfers are well known for their generosity in the clubhouse bar, let's hope they will spare the cost of a pint a year on behalf of one of the hot topics they pontificate upon, that being - whether they know it or not - "The Great Cause".

● **The writer, Eric Shiel, is Executive Director of the Joint Golf Course Committee.**